

Poplar Island

My Memories as a Boy



by Peter K. Bailey

\$19.50

The chart on the cover was issued in June, 1950, showing the size of Poplar and Jefferson Islands during our residence. Sharps Island, still in existence, can be seen at the bottom of the chart. (Original drawing by Peter Hanks.)

Cherish your memories!

Peter K Bailey

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POPLAR ISLAND

MY MEMORIES AS A BOY

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I dedicate this book to my family; to my father, whose dream was to own and operate his own hunting and fishing lodge on Poplar Island; and to my dear mother, whose devotion made it possible; both now deceased. To my brother, Hugh; my sister, Sally; and my brother, Andy. To my wife, Joyce; my daughter, Wendy, and her husband, Scott; and to our granddaughter, Alexa; and our grandchildren yet to come.

My hope is that you will enjoy my childhood memories of Poplar Island half as much as I have treasured them through the years.

FOREWORD

It was not that unusual fifty years ago to grow up on a farm, but growing up on a small island, with your immediate family as the only inhabitants, was a truly unique experience. My father's first dream put us on a beautiful waterfront farm on the northern Chesapeake Bay. His later dream moved us to a small island in the middle of the Chesapeake. The fortune of his dreams rewarded me with a treasure chest of childhood memories.

I was quite removed from a child's normal environment for the first ten years of my life. The youngest of four children, I was seven years old when we moved to Poplar Islands. I had no idea what to expect as I entered a whole new world. My days at Poplar Islands were very happy and left an indelible mark on my life.

Who knows how long we would have remained had it not been for the unfortunate death of my father. His dream of making the islands a quality resort for outdoor sportsmen and Bay yachtsmen was tragically cut short. But those few years of island life were more than enough to pass his dream on to me. Memories of the islands remained strong, and as I became older, I had a growing urge to return and complete my father's mission. But the islands were steadily washing into the Bay. As I grew older and wiser, and the islands grew smaller and smaller, I finally accepted the fact that no one in the Bailey family would ever be able to complete my father's dream.

I was obviously the last one to come to that realization. Even then, it did not come easily, for Poplar Island was an incredibly powerful force in my young life. My memories are many and they are happy, and I want to share them with my family. I want them to see a perspective of the islands that no one else saw except me.

Although I never kept a diary, I was very impressed by my father's boyhood diary, and my grandmother's story book diary that she started when they moved from New York to the farm in Maryland. From the time my good friend, Doug Hanks, first knew about my boyhood days at Poplar Islands, he has encouraged me to record these memories for my family. Although I started making notes many years ago, it has taken changes in life's perspectives to make me realize how very important it is to record this unique experience, particularly for my daughter, my granddaughter, and my grandchildren yet to come.

The memories herein recorded are all from my personal experience. Dialog, of course, cannot be accurate, but is based on my best recollection.

PART I

FROM PARADISE TO PARADISE

CHAPTER ONE

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

The story begins on October 4, 1941. Our family was aboard our old cruiser the *Jane* spending the night on the Bohemia River. My mother went into labor a couple of weeks early. Dad put the boat ashore, and somehow got my mother to the hospital in Wilmington. Early the next morning, I was born. Ironically, roughly twenty five years later, my wife and I were aboard our boat on the Miles River when I had to take her to the hospital at 2 a.m. to give birth to our beautiful daughter and only child, Wendy.

Although my birth place was Wilmington, I only stuck around there long enough for my mother and me to get out of the hospital. Our family was living at Wickwire Farms, about five miles from Earleville, Cecil County, Maryland.

My father, George Kennedy Bailey, and my grandmother, Sara Kennedy Bailey, had come from New York and purchased the farm in 1929. My father had just graduated from Harvard, but was unhappy with city life and wanted to own a farm. My grandfather, a prominent surgeon in New



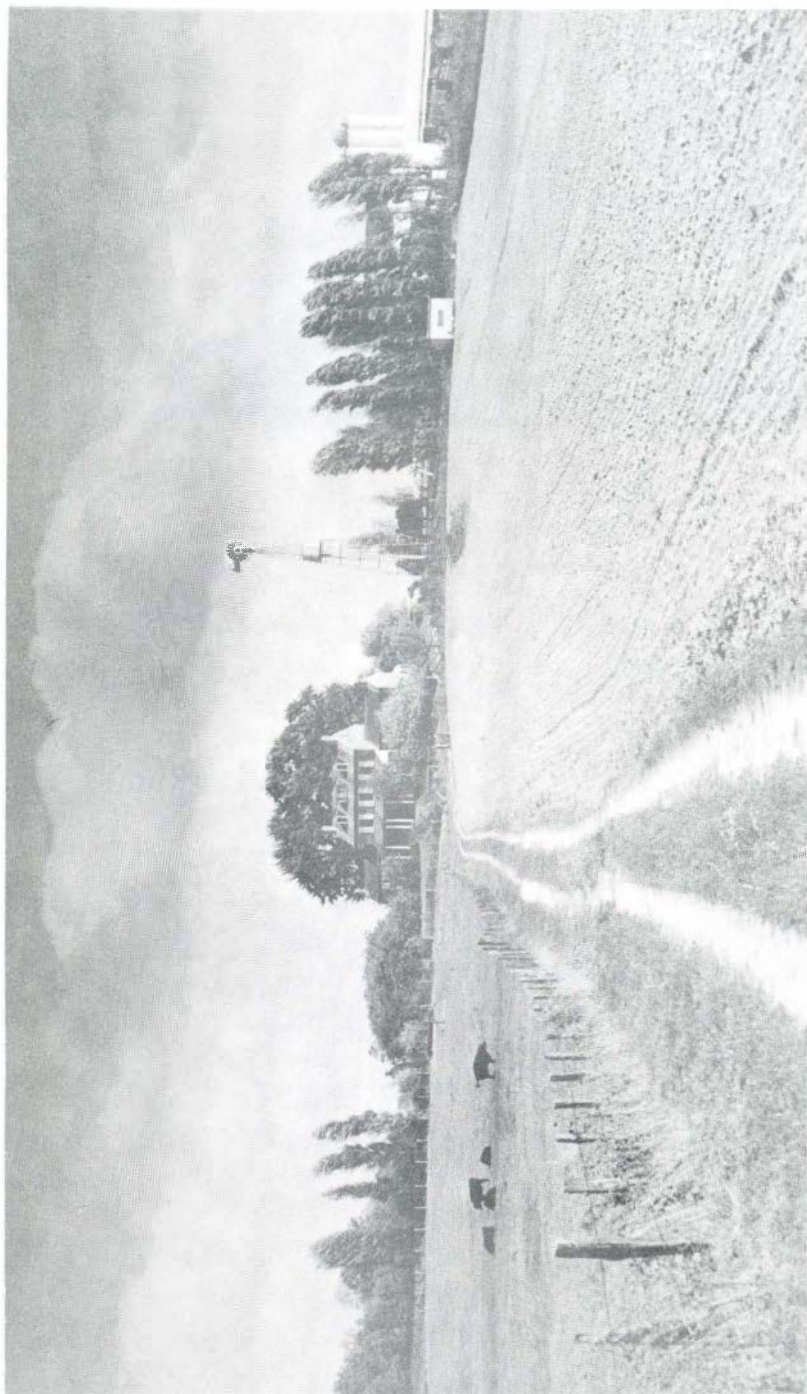
Our cruiser "Jane", from which my mother went to the hospital in the middle of the night to give birth. Frequent cruises on "Jane" started my love for boats and water.

York City, had recently died, and my grandmother was also ready for a change.

Growing up at Wickwire Farms was an experience that anyone, or almost anyone, would love. We lived in a large three-story brick house nestled among giant trees on high ground overlooking the upper Chesapeake Bay, just north of the Sassafras River.

We had 750 acres on two farms southwest of Earleville, Maryland, on the Chesapeake, bordering Pond Creek. The farms were called the Upper Farm and the Lower Farm, both with large, stately main residences, and numerous barns and outbuildings. The house on the Upper Farm had been my grandmother's, but she died before I was born. Our house was on the Lower Farm, yet the ground was still high, fading away about a quarter of a mile across an Aberdeen angus-grazing field to the Bay.

There was so much to do, chores of course, but loads of fun things too. At the shore, we had a nice beach for swimming, collecting drift wood, skipping stones, cooking hot dogs, boating, fishing; oh, so many things. There was an



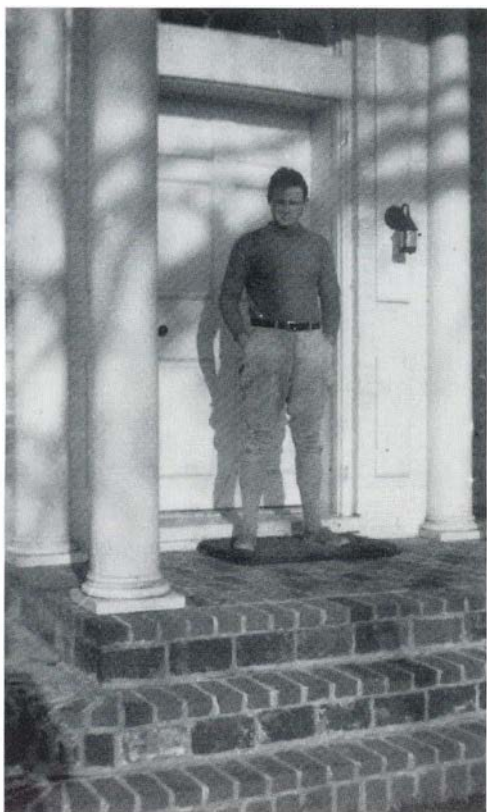
The main residence at Wickwire as viewed from Bay side.

inlet about 100 feet wide leading into Pond Creek with swift current and a great sandy bottom. We had a cabin by the shore that we used for picnics. My parents used to have bull roasts and pig roasts at the shore. My father would dig a big rectangular hole in the ground with coals at the bottom and different layers of food with seaweed in between.

Not far from the cabin was another larger cabin that my father leased to a group of fishermen from Tilghman Island during the spring fishing season. They used to net fish in the upper Bay and used our shore as their base of operation.

There was great duck hunting on the marshes of Pond Creek. My father loved to hunt, but I was too young to shoot a gun when we lived on the farm. My father was always inviting friends

from far and near to hunt, and I remember many parties and great times at the house. New Year's Eve was an especially fun time when everyone would dress up in formal attire. I would greet the guests and take their coats. At midnight my father would go outside and fire a shotgun to welcome in the new year.



*My father on the front steps
at Wickwire.*



My mother (left) at a cocktail party at a neighboring farm.

Aside from the shore, there was a lot of woodland to explore. There were also some streams on the farm, and of course, many fields. We used to build forts in one of the large corn fields. It seemed like a giant ranch to me. My father raised black angus cattle; he had a herd of about 250.

He was one of the first breeders in the United States to start importing prime bulls and cows from Scotland, to improve the breed. Dad entered his best bulls in show competition and won many blue ribbons and trophies. We had sheep, pigs, horses, chickens, dogs and cats. It seemed like every day there was something fun and different to do.

One afternoon, my sister, Sally, was grazing her horse in a small grassy field near one of the barns. She asked me to hold the horse while she went in the house to the bath-



Bonny with some decoys on the beach. Dad almost always included swan with his decoys.



Dad poling his gunning boat, the "Wildfowler", with Bonny on the flats of Pond Creek.



*Grandmother Bailey, Hugh, and Bonny on the
front steps at Wickwire.*

room. She had a length of baling twine tied to the bridle. After a while, I got tired of holding the string, so I tied it to a belt loop in my pants. All of a sudden, the horse raised its head sharply, lifting me off the ground before I knew what happened. My belt loop broke, I landed on the ground head first, and all I could see was stars. A quick lesson in how not to hold a horse.

I remember the first time I was allowed to help bring the bales of hay in from the field to the barn. It was supposed to storm and Dad wanted to get the hay bales in the barn before it rained. There were the men living on the farm who did most of the work, but we all helped load the trucks, then unload them onto a big conveyor that carried them into the barn. The bales were actually as big as me, so I couldn't have been much help!

When they were baling hay, I used to ride on the hay baler on a special seat back where the bales came out. Every once in a while, I would tackle a bale as it came out, rolling over with it on the ground feeling the prickle of hay on my back.

The youngest of four children, I wasn't always blessed with someone to play with, but I think I made the best of it. I remember Wickwire as a paradise. Each new day brought new adventure, and even at that young age, I retain vivid memories of a storybook life.

During the winter, when the big coal furnace was fired up in the basement, we would often go down in the basement to play. It was quite large, with several rooms. My oldest brother, Hugh, was our leader. One of the devilish things he did when my parents were away (and he was supposed to be baby sitting) was to put the giant poker in the furnace, get it red hot, then take it out and burn a hole



Dad working with his decoys amid debris washed in Pond Creek by a storm tide.

through the basement doors and the walls!

I remember saying during one of those special play times in the basement, "I guess we'll never move away from here, will we?" My sister said, "I guess not."

Well, it wasn't many months after that when my father got us all together and announced that we were moving to an island. I don't remember everyone's reaction, but at my age, the best description of my mood was curiosity.

I was in the second grade at Cecilton School. It was spring and we remained at Wickwire until school was out for the summer. Almost every Friday afternoon in the spring, my mother would pick us up at school, and we'd drive to Lowes Wharf at Sherwood, get on the boat, and head across to the islands which were soon to be our home.

Before I recall my wonderful memories of living on "the islands", I would like to go back in time and explore some of their history.

PART II

LOOKING BACK IN TIME

CHAPTER TWO

POPLAR ISLANDS HISTORY

Poplar Island holds a rather special place in history. It was the first place in Talbot County to be settled, and Talbot County boasts one of America's richest histories. As Dickson Preston said of Talbot County in his book Talbot County: A History, "Nowhere else in America do earth and salt water meet in so small an area over so many miles of tidal shoreline."

One Daniel Cugley was noted as the keeper of a herd of pigs on Poplar Island, and on September 3, 1632, William Claiborne recorded a payment of two hundred pounds of tobacco to Cugley "for a boare of Popeley's Island." This was almost two years before Lord Baltimore's Maryland founders arrived on March 25, 1634.

History is unclear on who first discovered the Chesapeake Bay, its islands, and its prominent regions. John Cabot, sailing for England's King Henry VII, was reported to have discovered the Chesapeake in 1498. However, Amerigo Vespucci, the Italian for whom America

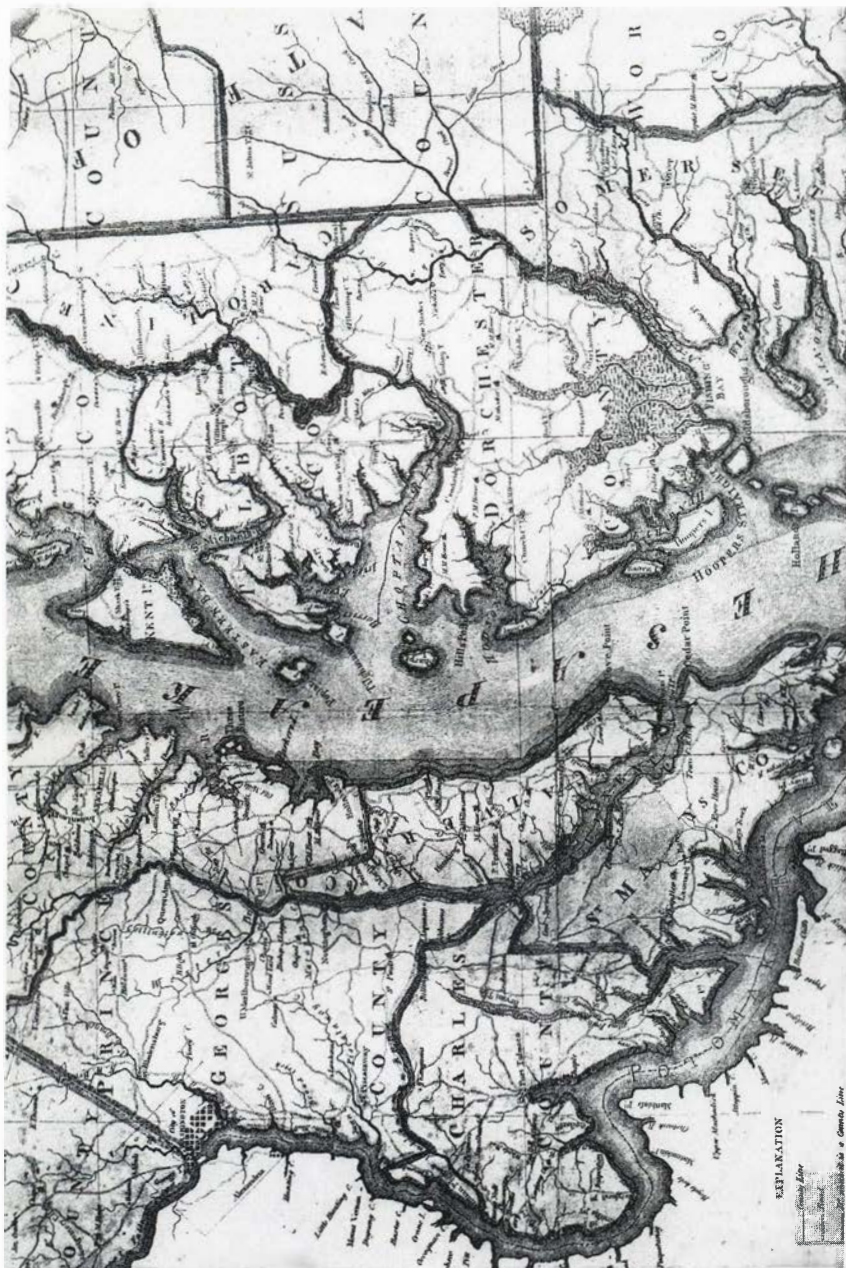
was named, may have been the first.

Although preceded by Spanish, French, and Italian explorers, the first successful bay colony was established by the English at Jamestown in 1607. Captain John Smith, sailing from Jamestown, explored the Chesapeake Bay on two separate voyages in the summer of 1608. On his first trip, the Indians and the mosquitoes drove them from the lower Eastern Shore toward the west, and the map that he later drew shows that he knew little of the long stretch of eastern shore from the Sassafras River to the Little Choptank. He was unaware of the existence of the Chester, Wye, Miles, Tred Avon, and Choptank Rivers. From a distance, the heavily-wooded Kent and Poplar Islands would have blocked his view of Eastern Bay, as Tilghman and Sharps Islands would have concealed the mouth of the Choptank.

Poplar Island was officially discovered and named by another Englishman, William Claiborne. Claiborne was appointed the colony's surveyor, and on explorations in 1626 and 1627, he conceived the idea of establishing a fur trading empire with its base on the large island which he named the Isle of Kent. Along the way, he located, claimed, and named Claiborne's Island, later to become Sharps; and Popeley's Island, later to be named Poplar. He named this one thousand acres of fertile land for an associate, Lieutenant Richard Popeley.

Popeley's Island was Talbot County's first place to be located and named, along with Sharps Island. Popeley's Island was the first place to be settled, and the first Talbot land to be planted. A group of men from Kent Island cleared and planted fields of corn and tobacco on Popeley's Island in 1634.

The following year, Claiborne granted Popeley's Island to his favorite cousin, Richard Thompson, who had come from England in 1631 and lived in Claiborne's house on Kent Island while looking for a suitable place to build his own plantation. Thompson soon brought his wife and child from England



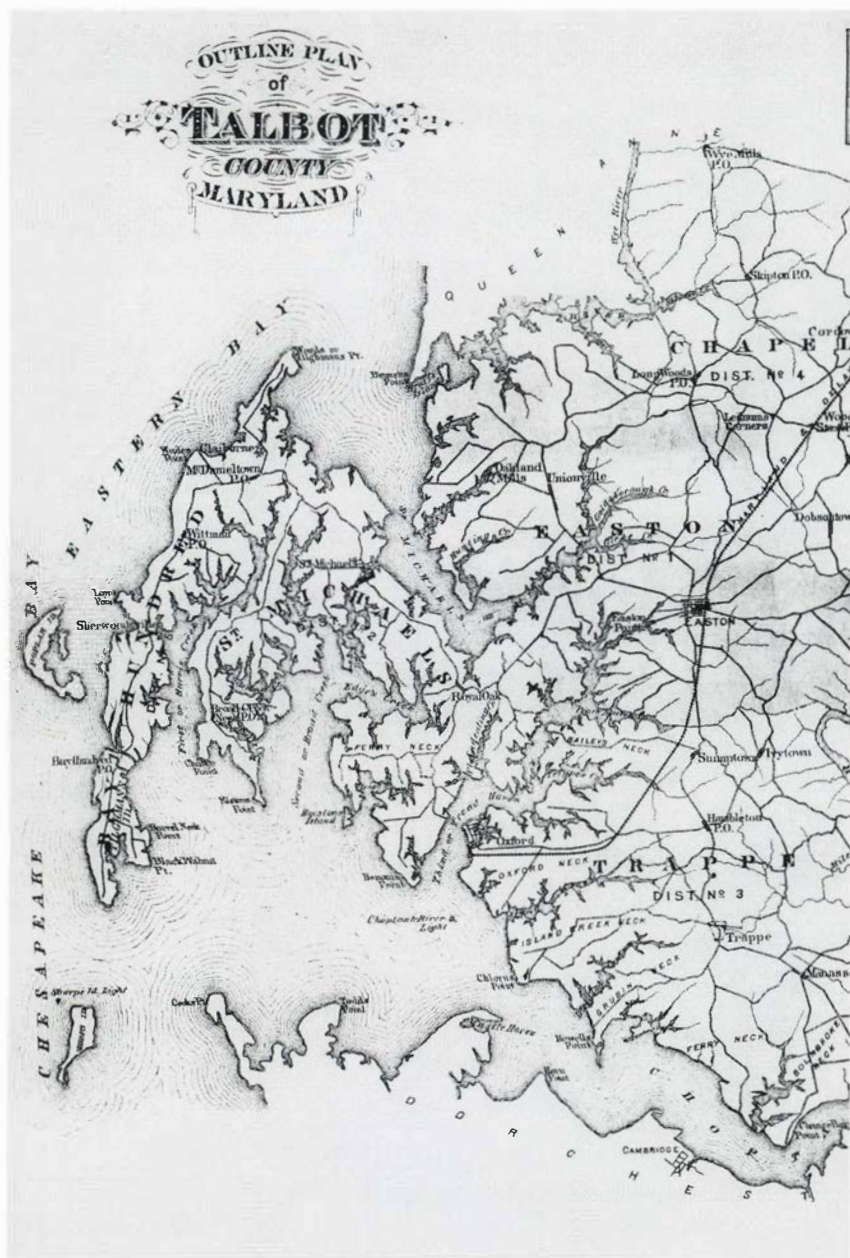
A 1795 map of the State of Maryland, showing Poplar and Sharps Islands in the center. (Atlas of Historical Maps of Maryland, 1608-1908.)

along with a maid servant and six male servants. Houses, barns, and other out-buildings were constructed. Additional land was cleared and planted with more corn and tobacco. By the spring of 1637, Talbot County's first plantation was thriving with at least ten residences and extensive crops.

That summer, upon returning from a fur trading expedition, Mr. Thompson found his wife and child and all his servants murdered. The livestock was slaughtered and all the buildings burned to the ground. Nanticoke Indians were blamed for the massacre. Richard Thompson built a new plantation on Kent Island where he remained until his death.

Thomas Hawkins was the next owner of Popeley's Island, which will hereafter be referred to as Poplar Island, but the date of his acquisition is unclear. Records show that in 1654, he sold half of the island to Seth Foster. Hawkins built a sizable plantation with livestock and crops, but died shortly thereafter in 1656. In his will, dated in 1656, but not probated until October 1669, he divided his land between his wife, Elizabeth and son, Thomas Hawkins, Jr. The detailed inventory of his estate revealed much about how they lived. All foodstuffs were produced on the premises. Corn was pounded into flour with a mortar and pestle to make bread. Hawkins' estate, not counting the land, was valued at 27,864 pounds of tobacco. Hawkins bequeathed his black horse with saddle and bridle to his friend, Seth Foster, who later married Hawkins' widow.

The next owner, Alexander D'Hinojosa, purchased Poplar Island from Seth and Elizabeth Foster for three hundred pounds sterling in 1669, according to one reference. D'Hinojosa was the exiled former governor of the Dutch Colony near New Castle, Delaware. Maryland Governor Charles Calvert granted D'Hinojosa sanctuary after his colony was seized by the English. Another reference states that Lord Baltimore had confiscated Poplar Island from the "adherents of Claiborne" and granted it to D'Hinojosa. There is very



An 1877 map of Talbot County, showing Poplar and Sharps Islands. (The 1877 Atlases and other Early Maps of the Eastern Shore of Maryland.)

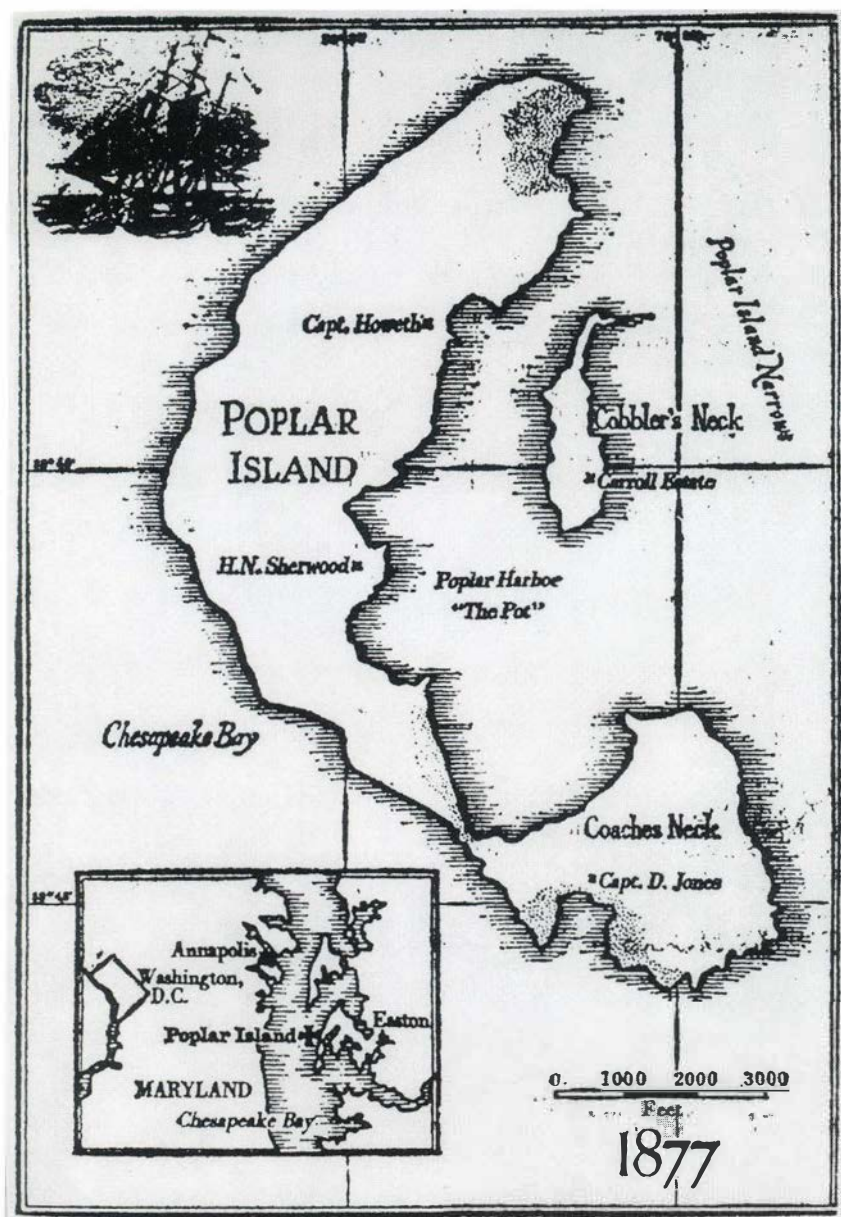
little written about this owner except that he lived on Poplar Island with his large family for many years.

The 18th century was quiet on Poplar Island, with very little coverage in local history books. One report indicates that the winter of 1780-1781 was particularly severe, with the Bay heavily frozen over. People travelled from the mainland to the island in carts and carriages.

The next mention of Poplar Island's history doesn't come until the War of 1812, when the British fleet invaded the Chesapeake Bay. Under the command of Admirals Warren and Cockburn, the British occupied Sharps, Tilghmans, and Poplar Islands in the spring of 1813. Poplar Island was owned at that time by William Sears, who claimed damages for his livestock lost to the British. Just forty miles north of Poplar Island, the "Star Spangled Banner" was written during the British attack on Fort McHenry on September 14, 1814. By November 2, 1814, the British withdrew from Talbot waters, but conflict continued elsewhere on the Bay until 1815.

In 1835, the sloop *Hester Ann* was lost off Poplar Island in a severe December storm. All on board were lost, including John Paca, owner of Wye Island.

Charles Carroll, grandson of the signer of the Declaration of Independence, owned Poplar Island in the 1840's. He had learned that there was a market for black cat fur in China, and concluded that Poplar Island would be the ideal place to raise the cats. In December of 1847, R. O. Ridgeway, acting as an agent for Carroll, advertised that he would pay 25 cents each for one thousand black cats delivered to his store. A supply of tomcats was already in residence, and Ridgeway was anticipating a flourishing business. The Great Poplar Island Black Cat Fur Farm came to an abrupt end when the weather turned severely cold later that winter. The Bay froze over, and the cats decided they should take advantage of this op-



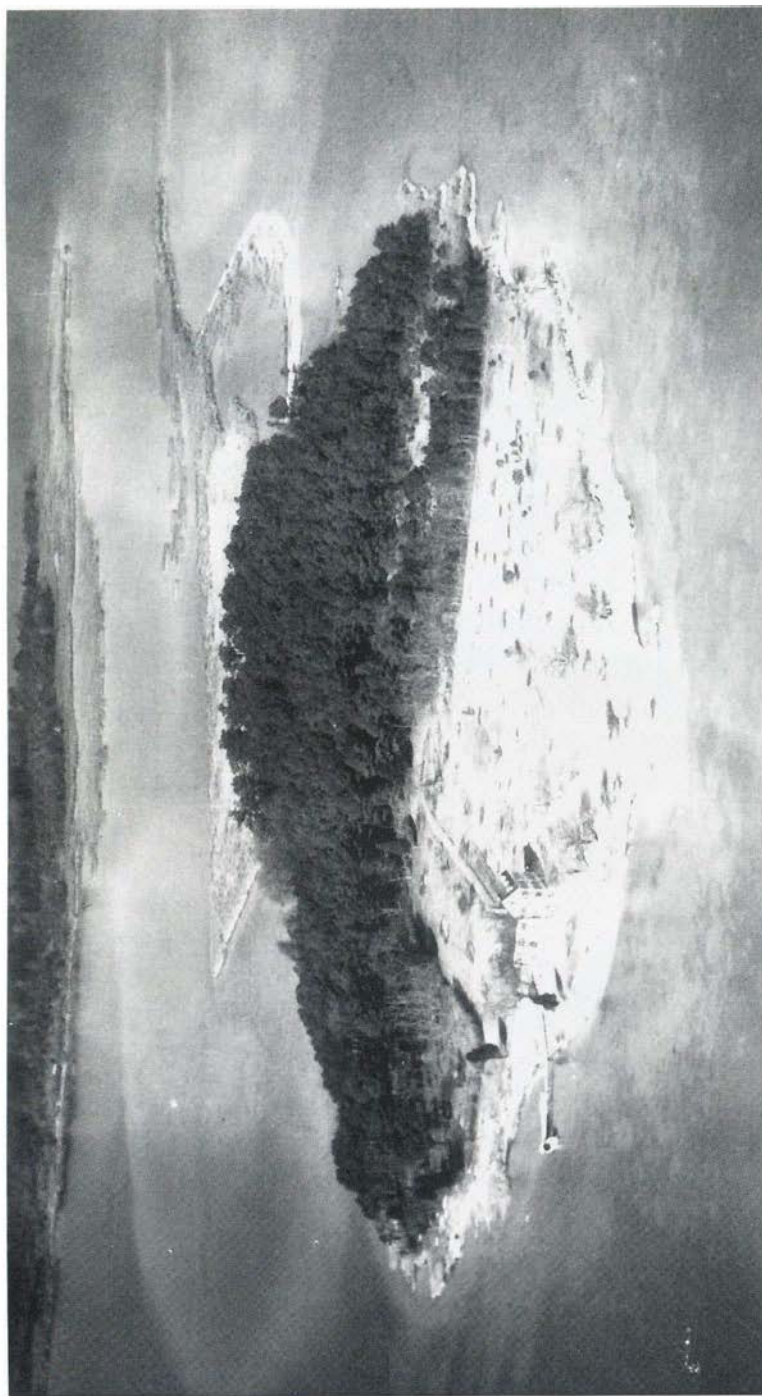
Map of Poplar Island as it looked in 1877.

portunity to return home. What a sight it must have been to watch hundreds of black, furry animals rush across that frozen wonderland!

By this time, Poplar Island had been eroded by Bay waters into three separate land masses: the largest island, Poplar; a smaller island to the south still connected to Poplar Island by a thread at low tide, Coaches Neck; and an even smaller island to the east, named Cobblers Neck (now known as Jefferson Island). During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, fifteen families inhabited the islands, including the Ridgeways, Howeths, Sherwoods, Carrolls, Jones, Lednums, Haddaways, Sinclairs, Richardsons, Valliants and Harrisons.

In the 1880's, the three islands of the Poplar Islands group had a population of 70 to 100 people. At the turn of the century, wheat and tomatoes were grown and sold on the mainland. People came over from the mainland to help harvest the crops and were well taken care of by the islanders. It was like one big family. There was a sawmill, a general store, a post office, and a combination schoolhouse-church. A preacher came over on Sundays to preach in the schoolhouse. Doctors Louis Seth and Kennedy Wilson visited the islands to provide medical care. Those working on the water sold their abundant oyster catches for 35 to 50 cents per bushel.

There were about 35 students enrolled in a four-hundred-square-foot schoolhouse. By 1910, several residents had moved off the island, and school enrollment had dropped to the point that classes were moved to a vacant room in the home of Mr. Gus Sinclair. The school was then used exclusively as the church. In 1914, a Mrs. Thomas, part owner of Poplar Island, requested the school board to reopen the school. The school was reopened with eight students enrolled, and Mr. Joe Valliant was the teacher. His salary for the school term was \$390.00. In



*An aerial view of Jefferson Island around 1929.
Photo courtesy Historical Society of Talbot County.*

1918, the Poplar Island school was closed for good. It seems that there were no permanent residents of the islands during the 1920's. They were used only for hunting and some occasional "moonshining."

In 1929, Poplar Island drew attention once again with one of Talbot County's few raids ever staged by Federal "revenooers." Sheriff Faulkner and three agents broke up a one-thousand-gallon still and seized 21,500 gallons of whiskey. A total of nine men were arrested and taken to Baltimore.

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CHAPTER THREE

A SPECIAL PLACE IN HISTORY - THE JEFFERSON ISLANDS CLUB

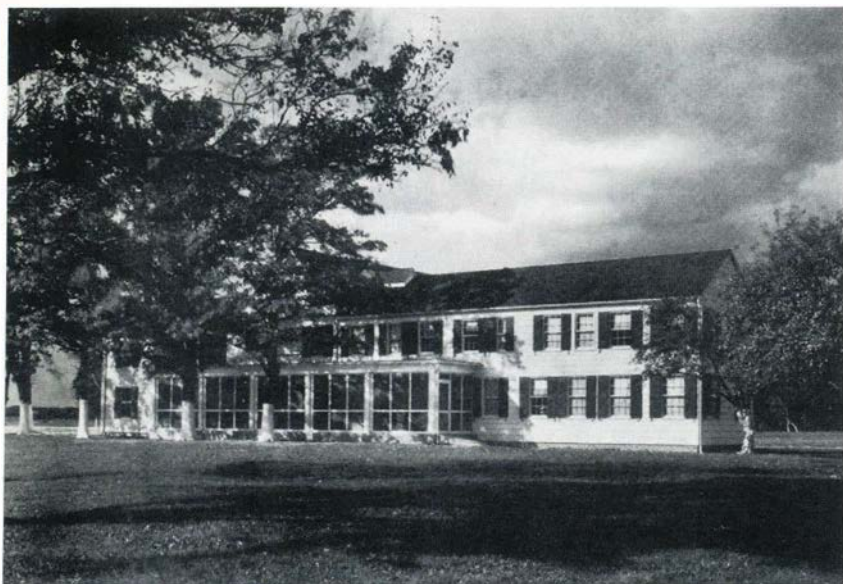
In the latter part of 1929, a few prominent Democratic Congressmen were attracted by Poplar Island and began negotiations to purchase the island group for the purpose of establishing an exclusive club. They were attracted by the islands' privacy, the natural harbor, their close proximity to the capital, and the islands' natural beauty. The Democrats, in their own words, were in search of:

"a quiet, undisturbed and attractive spot where (we) might mix the travail of political conferences with the pleasantries of clubhouse fraternity and where the humdrum of party politics might be broken now and then by communion with the great outdoors."

Although the Democrats' plan was to purchase all three islands, they were successful in purchasing only Pop-



*Map of the Jefferson Islands, drawn for the
Jefferson Islands Club.
Courtesy Mary Jane Fairbank.*



Jefferson Islands Club, view of the clubhouse from the southeast.

Photo courtesy Mary Jane Fairbank.

lar and Cobblers Neck. The island group was renamed "The Jefferson Islands" by the Maryland legislature.

On January 5, 1931, the Jefferson Islands Club was officially established with 35 charter members. The three Senators credited with founding the club were elected its first senior officers. Senator Joseph T. Robinson of Arkansas was chairman of the Board of Governors, Senator Key Pittman of Nevada was president, and Senator Harry B. Hawes of Missouri was vice president. The other officers were Congressman Parker Corning of New York, Ambassador to Italy, Breckenridge Long, and Senator Millard E. Tydings of Maryland.

The purpose of the club, as stated in the by-laws, was threefold:

- to support, defend and advance the fundamental principles of government enunciated by Thomas Jefferson.
- to provide a clubhouse with suitable surroundings and comforts, where members may assemble, discuss and

promote Jeffersonian philosophies to the end they may become controlling in Federal and state governments, and

- to hold annual and special meetings for this purpose in surroundings that will provide recreation while pursuing this object.

The founding members called their club “a shrine for Democrats” which among other things, would preserve historic party keepsakes, paintings, cartoons, and campaign memorabilia.

The Jefferson Islands Club was very exclusive with membership by invitation only. Annual dues were \$100 with an initiation fee of \$500. In 1936, Missouri Senator Harry S. Truman declined membership, writing the club president that he simply “couldn’t afford to join.” A reporter for the New York Times wrote in 1939 that it was “practically impossible for a non-Jeffersonian to blast his way past the Club’s



*Rear view of the Jefferson Islands clubhouse, from the northeast.
Photo courtesy Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.*



The skeet course at the Jefferson Islands Club.

Photo courtesy Mary Jane Fairbank.

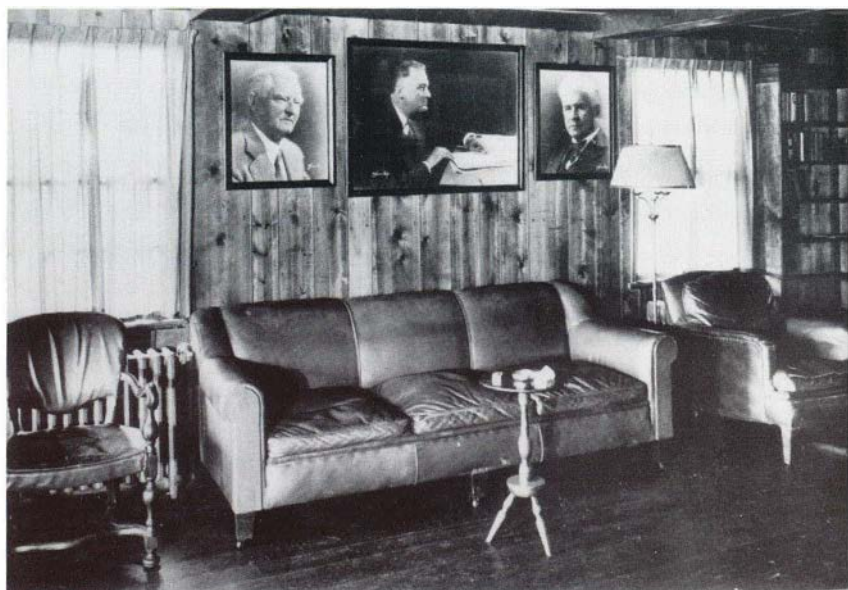
Committee on Membership.” He went on to write that “the only rank outsider permitted to roam unchallenged in the region of the mulberry tree (Roosevelt’s favorite spot on the island) is a twenty-five-pound wild turkey that flew over to Jefferson Island from the mainland two years ago, joined up with the tame flock, and now regards himself as a Democrat.”

Members of the highly exclusive Jefferson Islands Club included President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Vice President John Nance Garner, several governors, Senators and Congressmen, as well as ambassadors, the Postmaster General, James A. Farley, and Bernard Baruch, statesman. There were also several prestigious businessmen among the early members, including the chairman of General Electric, publisher of the Houston Chronicle, and August A. Busch Jr., chairman of Anheuser-Busch, Inc. Membership expanded

over the years to include a virtual "Who's Who" of Democratic politicians, statesmen, and business leaders.

By 1934, the Democrats had completely refurbished the island's original colonial house, which included a large living room, a dining room, kitchen, and pantry on the first floor, and six bedrooms on the second floor. A Presidential suite was added on the first floor, along with a large porch across the front of the clubhouse. Two additional bedrooms were built on the second floor. Every room in the club had a view of the tree-shaded grounds and the lovely waters of the Chesapeake beyond.

With the clubhouse additions, there were fourteen single beds for members, with another seven in the Presidential suite, which included accommodations for the Secret Service. The President's bedroom was paneled in knotty pine and simply furnished, with a three-quarter bed made from an original design by Thomas Jefferson.



The President's study, Jefferson Islands Club.

Photo courtesy Mary Jane Fairbank.



President Franklin D. Roosevelt enjoying one of his many "conferences" under the old mulberry tree with his good friend and advisor, James A. Farley, Postmaster General of the United States, sitting at FDR's favorite table from the clubhouse.

Photo courtesy Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.

In addition to the clubhouse expansion, two cottages were built, one for housing the club manager and his family, and one for storing equipment, including fishing tackle and guns and ammunition. Facilities for skeet were built along with ranges for rifle and pistol practice.

With harbor waters relatively shallow, a long dock was necessary to accommodate the club's vessels. The dock was supposedly constructed to the exact length of the Washington monument, 555 feet. In addition to club boats of 32 feet and 38 feet, club member John D. Reilly, president of Todd Shipyards, donated a 65-foot-boat "capable of negotiating the Chesapeake in any kind of weather." This vessel made a regular weekend run, leaving Annapolis at 4:00 p.m. on Friday, and returning from Jefferson Island at 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.

A farmer's cottage was built on the adjoining Poplar Island, and forty acres were cleared and tilled to raise food for chickens and game. Wild turkeys, pheasants, and rabbits were brought to the big island to give club members the opportunity for an "annual shoot." Some goats were also transported into residence on Poplar Island, but they were not included on the list of available game.

Food was obviously an important part of club members' enjoyment at the islands. Meals were described in a club bulletin as "not elaborate, plain but wholesome." The main attraction, of course, was food produced from the Bay, "oysters procured at our own dock (from club-owned oyster beds), soft- and hard-shell crabs, and good fish." Members were allowed to bring their own special food or delicacies, which the kitchen staff would prepare without charge.



Postmaster General, James A. Farley at bat at one of the frequent congressional softball games. (A few years later, this would be the site of the Bailey family croquet course.)

Photo courtesy Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum.



The lounge at the Jefferson Islands Club. At right over the mantle are the two lanterns which Senator Key Pittman used for target practice one evening. Photo, H. Robbins Hollyday collection. Courtesy Historical Society of Talbot County.

Besides the good food and relaxation, as you would expect, hunting and fishing were probably the main attraction. "Some of the best duck shooting in the Chesapeake Bay is found on the shores of our islands," wrote Harry Hawes to club members in 1934. "Each year blinds are set up and, on the inland pond on the large island, a habitation for black ducks has been found where they breed throughout the year." Poplar Island also provided good cover for quail, wild turkey, and pheasant.

Fishing, of course, was excellent around the islands, with blue fish, rock, hard heads, sea trout, and several varieties of bottom fish. There was always plenty of sport for club members to enjoy.

Key to the success of the Jefferson Islands Club was the personal attention that members received while at the islands. Hobson and Nora Jones were caretakers for several

years. Carroll Newcomb of Neavitt helped construct the original clubhouse, and also served as yacht captain, ferrying weekend guests from Annapolis and making trips to and from Sherwood.

The most prominent caretaker and yacht captain was Varnon Haddaway from Sherwood who came to the islands in 1937. Captain Haddaway was affectionately known as "Bunzy" from his boyhood days when he worked in a bakery and carried buns to school in his pocket. Captain Bunzy was a wonderful man and an all-around talented waterman. He and his wife, Alice, and their children, Mary Jane and Eugene, took up residence in the caretaker's cottage in 1937. They were so well liked by the members that they were considered "family," and true friendships were established with several club members.



Front porch of the Jefferson Islands Club. (Still remaining after the fire, the porch was incorporated into the new lodge built in 1948.) Photo courtesy Mary Jane Fairbank.

One evening in 1945, Harry Truman asked, "Captain Bunzy, do you suppose you and I could get out early one morning and catch some big fish before the rest of these S.O.B.'s get up?"

Captain Bunzy replied, "Of course," and fishing they went. According to Captain Bunzy, "We caught eight fish, 12 to 15 pounders, and when we got back, Mr. Truman had me string them up along the pier; and then he grabbed the rope on the big bell we had there, and he began to ring and ring, and hollered for all the Congressmen to wake up and see what they had missed that morning."

Membership in the Jefferson Islands Club was restricted to males only. "Families of members and private secretaries when accompanied by a member" were allowed, but female guests were somewhat of a rarity. Occasionally, however, there were special events scheduled just for the ladies.

President Roosevelt was popularly associated with the Jefferson Islands Club. Although he was a charter member, he didn't get a chance to visit the islands until the end of his first term. Thereafter, however, he visited the club often. He sometimes took family members and friends, but he also used the club extensively for meetings. When he held court under the big mulberry tree, he had the caretaker's wife, Alice Haddaway, bring a little maple dropleaf table from the clubhouse, which he used for his "conferences." Today, that memorable table stands in Mary Jane Haddaway Fairbanks' kitchen in Sherwood.

A memo dated June 21, 1937, outlined the agenda for a three-day meeting of the Cabinet at the club, which included "support of New Deal ideals."

When Roosevelt was at the islands, the Secret Service was everywhere, and Navy craft patrolled offshore. The press was often discouraged from visiting, with travel plans sometimes kept secret. For the June 24-27 weekend rendezvous, the only coverage allowed was by still cameras, and



Moonlight over the "Pot", Jefferson Islands Club. Photo courtesy Mary Jane Fairbank.

only on Sunday afternoon.

Congressmen, too, used the club for business, as well as pleasure, although the latter was clearly more abundant. Senator Hawes of Missouri was reported to have drafted the Philippine Islands Independence Bill “before blazing logs in the huge fireplace in the clubhouse.”

What would a men’s sports club be without an occasional demonstration of one’s marksmanship “inside” the clubhouse? Mrs. Haddaway recalls one night when Senator Key Pittman took out his pair of pearl-handled revolvers, sat down on the couch in the lounge, and calmly shot out the lanterns on the mantle. On another occasion, a picture was taken of President Truman twirling these same revolvers during a card game.

During the years of World War II, the club was an especially welcome diversion from the rigors of Washing-



Captain “Bunzy” Haddaway in “Hound Dog” at the Jefferson Islands Club dock.

Photo courtesy Mary Jane Fairbank.

ton. Probably the most famous party was held on September 22nd and 23rd, 1945, just after VJ Day. Maryland businessman, Russell M. Arundel invited several hundred friends to a party in honor of former Congressman and assistant to FDR, James Barnes of Illinois. The guest list included many well known statesmen, war heroes, and businessmen. Among those attending were Generals Omar Bradley, J. W. Stillwell, George Marshall, A. A. Vandergrift, and Louis B. Hershey. Politicians included Dean Acheson, Carl Vinson, Bernard Baruch, Lyndon Johnson, Ellsworth Bunker, Abe Fortas, John Connally, and Cordell Hull. Heads of many of the top corporations in America were there. Most of Congress, the Supreme Court, and the Truman Administration were in attendance, including President Truman himself.

Liquid refreshment included three hundred cases of Mt. Vernon rye, one hundred cases of Vat 69 scotch, fifteen cases of bourbon, and five hundred cases of Budweiser. There were six hundred people for lunch, with two hundred of those invited to stay for dinner. A hundred or so people were served dinner on the front porch, and Mrs. Haddaway's daughter, Mary Jane, recalls:

I was serving peas and I had two bowls, one in each hand. I reached over to put one bowl on the table, and as I leaned forward, I inadvertently poured the other bowl down the back of President Truman. I stood there hoping the floor would swallow me up, but when he turned around and saw the look on my face, he put his arm around me and said, "Aw, hell, Honey, don't worry about it; you'll have a story to tell your grandchildren."

After dinner, the piano was taken out on the porch, and the trio of President Truman on the piano, Morton Downey, Sr., and Mary Jane sang "Mexicali Rose" and "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning."

The end of an era came not six months later on March 5th, 1946, a cold clear night when Mrs. Haddaway was awakened by a loud popping noise. "At first I thought it was coming from the generator, but when I looked out the window, I saw flames coming from the clubhouse. My husband immediately ran over to try and save the guns that were kept there, but it was already too late. So much was lost, including furniture and silver we had stored there in preparation for our eventual return to living on the mainland." The fire started in a faulty electrical outlet in the Presidential bedroom, and the only remains when the flames died away were the brick chimneys and the front porch.

This unique club was like no other in the annals of American politics. Only those ascribing to Jeffersonian ideals were allowed to join. Statesmen, politicians, and captains of American industry enjoyed Poplar and Jefferson Islands for fifteen years. The very rich and famous, including U.S. presidents, graced these islands and helped make them an even more important part of Talbot County and American history.

Club members wanted to rebuild the clubhouse, but insurance limitations prevented its reconstruction.

The club soon found and purchased St. Catherines Island at the confluence of the Potomac and Wicomico Rivers for \$29,500. The club still exists at this location, but obviously, with a somewhat different flavor.

Chapter 3 References

1. Abribat, Beverly G., The Jefferson Islands Club - The Exclusive Chesapeake Bay Resort of Prominent Democrats, St. Michaels, Md. 21663, Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, October, 1988.

OWNERS OF POPLAR AND JEFFERSON ISLANDS

Poplar Island, Inc.	1983 - Present
Smithsonian Institution	1966 - 1983
William L. Elkins	1965 - 1966
Daniel H. and Louise D. Hodgman	1960 - 1965
Harrison C. and Mary F. Colket	1957 - 1960
John T. and Mary A. Dorrance	1953 - 1957
George K. and Marion W. Bailey	1948 - 1953
Jefferson Islands Club, Inc.	1931 - 1948
Millard E. Tydings	1930 - 1931
Isaac C. and Harriett S. Rosenthal	1926 - 1930

Owners of Various Portions of the Islands

Joshua F. and Mabel V. Johnson	1920 - 1926
Lester L. and Mabel D. Stevens	
H. Melvin and Emelie V. Bull	
John E. and Margaret E. Stansbury	
Harvey C. and Nannie Howeth	1876 - 1920
James M. and Kate O. Howeth	
Charles J. and Charlotte Howeth	
Hollie S. Valliant	
Mary B. Thomas	
Levi Howeth	
Elizabeth J. Howeth	
Charles Carroll	1840's
Alexander D'Hinojosa	1669 -
Elizabeth Hawkins and Thomas Hawkins, Jr.	1656 - 1669
Seth Foster (half of Poplar Island)	1654 -
Thomas Hawkins	1638 - 1656
Richard Thompson	1635 - 1638
William Claiborne	1626 - 1635

PART III

POPLAR ISLAND MEMORIES

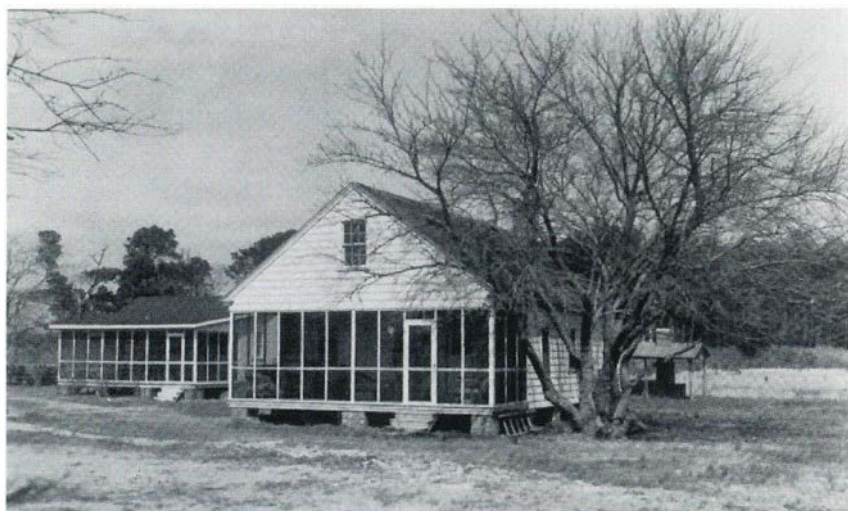
CHAPTER 4

ISLAND BOUND

Having already known Poplar and Jefferson Islands, as soon as they came on the market, my father knew that he had to own them and build his own hunting and fishing lodge. Early in 1948, he was successful in purchasing the islands from the Jefferson Islands Club, and quickly began planning our new life. With our weekend visits in the spring of 1948, the move in June was not to a strange place. Many things were moved by car on these weekend



The Bailey family upon their arrival at Jefferson Island. (From left): Me, Dad, Mom, Sally, and Andy. Hugh was still away at school in Pennsylvania.



Our first home at the Islands, the cottages. Since the lodge hadn't been started, we took up residence in the cottage at right. The cottage on the left served as our kitchen.

trips but when the big move came, my father contracted with Berry Van Lines of Easton. With the narrow two-lane roads that existed in those days, the sixty to seventy mile trip from Wickwire to Sherwood took a lot longer than it would today. And then, of course, there was the boat ride across to the islands.

The Islands, as they were referred to, consisted of three islands, forming a natural harbor protected from every direction except the entrance from the east. The southern-most island was named Coaches; it was owned by someone else, uninhabited and not used. Coaches had approximately ninety acres, about 75% wooded and the remainder somewhat marshy. The big island, nearly two hundred acres, was Poplar Island, the southern tip lying only a few hundred yards to the west of Coaches, and extending northward about a half mile and arcing back toward the east.

Poplar had a lot of trees but also a lot of low land without trees. It was washing rather badly from the north and west with trees regularly falling into the Bay. And just

to the east of Poplar's northern half was the smallest island, Jefferson (our new home), at about forty acres.

My father's plan was to build a lodge on the site of the burned Jefferson Island Club on Jefferson Island, retaining the old club's brick porch that included a ramp for Roosevelt's wheelchair. There were two cottages, not far from the site, that became our home until the lodge was finished. I had left what I thought was Paradise, but what was I entering, a different kind of Paradise. I cannot remember looking back.

Since the new lodge had not yet been started, and we were going to live in one of the cottages, there was no room for most of our furniture. It was stored in one of the old warehouses at Lowes Wharf.

Our temporary residence was a small five-room cottage with three sets of white steps on the bedroom side. The white steps prompted my father to name the cottage "Little Baltimore." I shared a bedroom with my brother, Andy, who was 3-1/2 years older than me. In the second cottage, one hundred or so feet away, is where we had our kitchen and ate our meals. Thank goodness it was summertime so we didn't have to go out in the cold to get to the kitchen, and the wonderful meals our mother cooked for us!

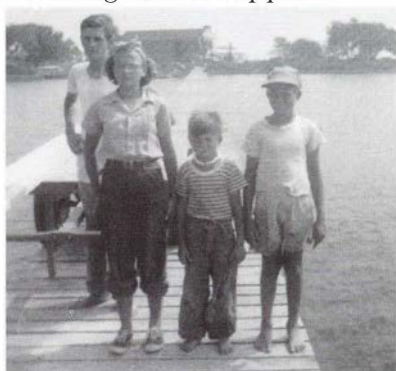


The new dock under construction, viewed from the end. It looked and sometimes seemed like a half mile long; actual length 612 ft. The previous pier at the Jefferson Islands Club, in the same location, was reported to be the same length as the height of the Washington Monument, 555 ft.

Everyone worked hard all day, and I assume, slept well at night. For me, it was a delightful new adventure, and I jumped out of bed every morning eager to meet the new day.

There was so much to do to get everything in order and get the lodge under construction, that the island seemed to be a bee hive of activity. I had my chores and I loved to help out all I could with the various projects; but at age seven, I was of limited assistance, and there was ample time for exploring my new environment. Every day I found time to roam the islands and delight in my new surroundings.

My father had bought two Chesapeake Bay fishing party boats, a 41-footer named *Sally Anne* after my sister, and a 43-footer named *Marion* after my mother. Following the purchase of these boats, and several row boats, one of the highest priorities was rebuilding the dock that had been largely destroyed by ice during the winter of 1947. Lumber for the new dock was cut from our woods at Wickwire and hauled on trucks to Lowes Wharf at Sherwood. To get to 5 feet of water at low tide, the dock was built 612 feet long, and that takes a lot of lumber. Truckload after truckload was offloaded at Lowes Wharf onto a barge and towed to the island. I wasn't much help with unloading the barges, but it was a lot of fun watching and providing moral support.



This motley looking crew is the Bailey children in their formal island garb. Hugh, Sally, Me, and Andy, before the dock railing was completed.

CHAPTER FIVE

POPLAR ISLANDS LODGE

Construction of the new lodge was started in early 1949, even before the dock was completed. Plans called for twelve bedrooms, a large lounge-dining room with cathedral ceiling, a very handsome den where my father loved to entertain guests, a large commercial kitchen, and five fireplaces. There was also one guest suite on the second floor with its own living room and fireplace. A separate living room was included in the family section of the lodge. A unique feature was a large cupola on the main roof, enclosed entirely with glass. It was accessible by a ladder from the attic and included a 360-degree bench seat, from which one could enjoy a breathtaking view of the islands and the Chesapeake Bay in all directions.

Day Construction Company was contracted to build the lodge. Having to transport workers three miles across the water added another element of difficulty. The workers were picked up at Lowes Wharf every morning at 7 a.m. and



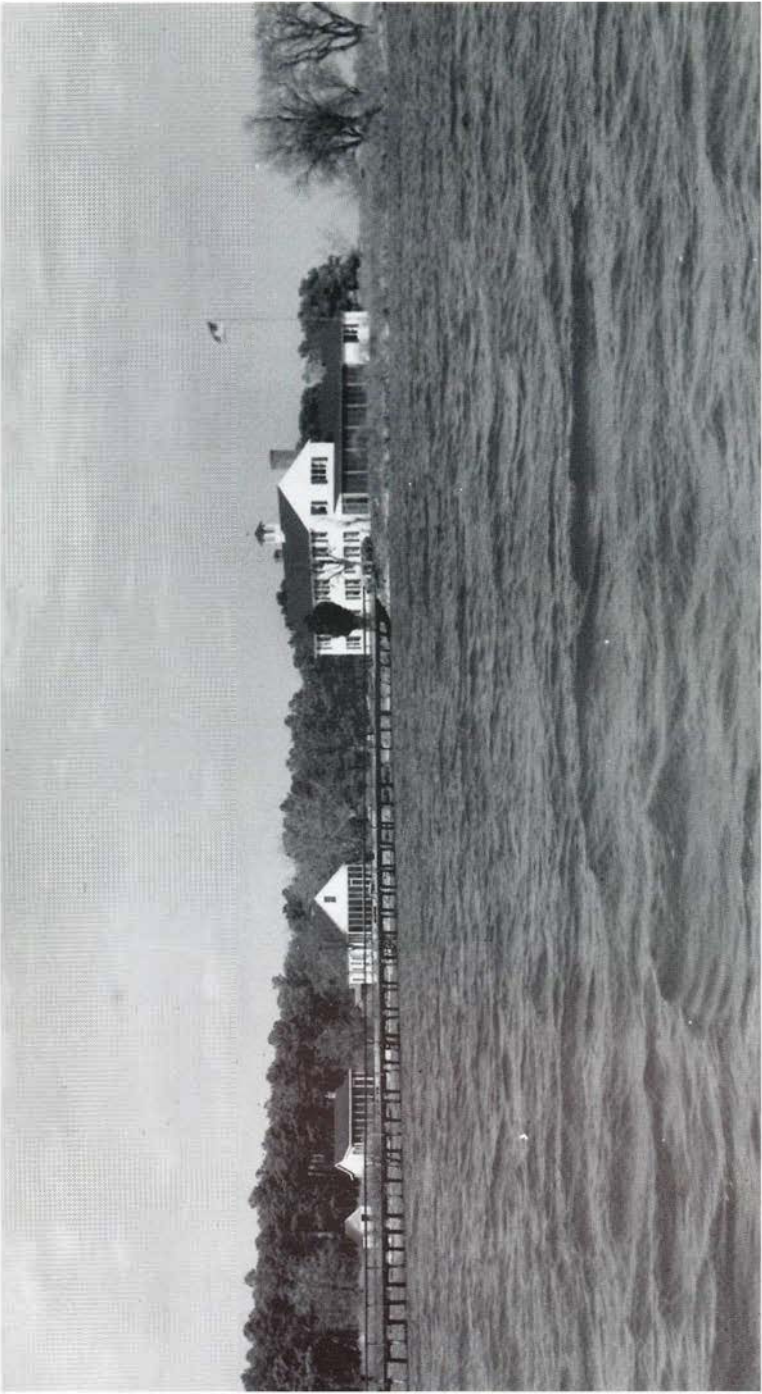
The new lodge, as construction was nearing an end. At the right end of the porch is the original ramp from the Jefferson Islands Club, which was constructed for President Roosevelt's wheelchair.

returned by 5 p.m. All the building materials had to be brought over from the mainland by barge. One of my favorites of all those materials were the bricks. There were thousands of them required for the many fireplaces, and a brick was something that I could carry. I might not have been able to carry as many as my older brothers or the men, but I could nonetheless carry some and take pride in being of some help.

The barge was brought in as close to shore as possible, and the bricks were offloaded into wheelbarrows on the dock. I remember there were clamping devices with handles that would pick up eight or ten bricks at a time. That quantity was kind of heavy, but I strained to be as much help as possible. I could always get a breather by hauling



The new lodge with everything finally finished. The porch foundation, still intact after the fire that destroyed the Jefferson Islands clubhouse, was incorporated in the new lodge. The cupola, accessible by ladder from the attic, provided a breathtaking view of the Chesapeake Bay in all directions.



View of the lodge as seen when approaching from the mainland. To the left are the two cottages that were our home until the lodge was finished. At the extreme left is the power house where the two generators were located.



The main lounge in the lodge. There were fireplaces at each end. The harbor, called "The Pot", and Coaches Island provided the view from the front side of the lounge.



The den, with the bar at the right, was a great spot for card games, lies and laughter. Behind the bar are photos of some of Dad's prize bulls from Wickwire.

two bricks at a time, one in each hand.

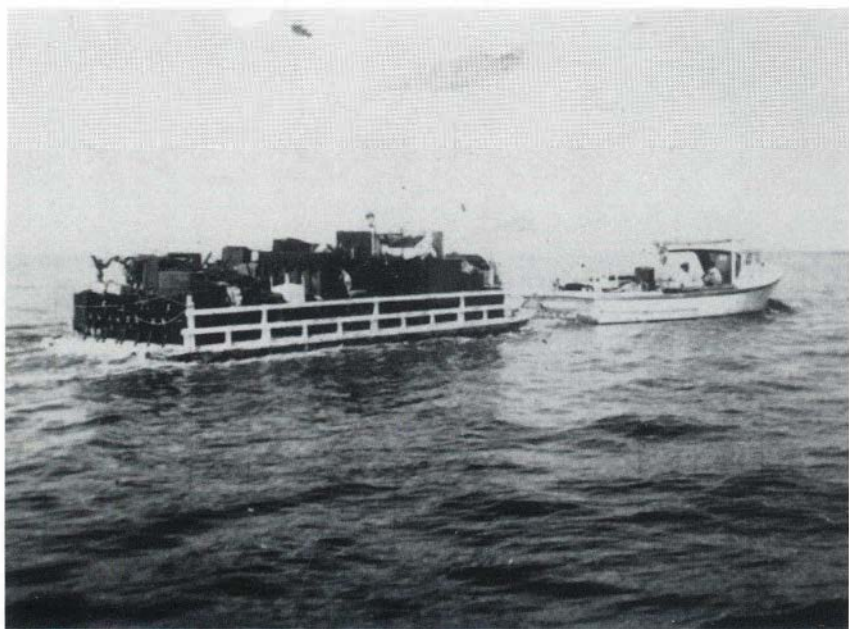
There were piles of wood everywhere, and I can remember some nights after dinner climbing up on a large stack of boards, lying on my back, and staring up at the stars. Whatever kept me occupied during the day, there was always time to check out progress on the building, talk to the men, and ask them lots of questions. One day I got a question from one of the men. He said, "You wouldn't know who's been fooling with that floor joist over there, would you?"

I was terror-struck, I didn't know what a floor joist was, but I was sure I knew what he was talking about. There was a large plank that had been shaved with some kind of a tool (I believe you call it an adz). Over the weekend, I had seen the plank with the adz in a box nearby, and I had done some extra shaving (trying to help). I had forgotten about it,

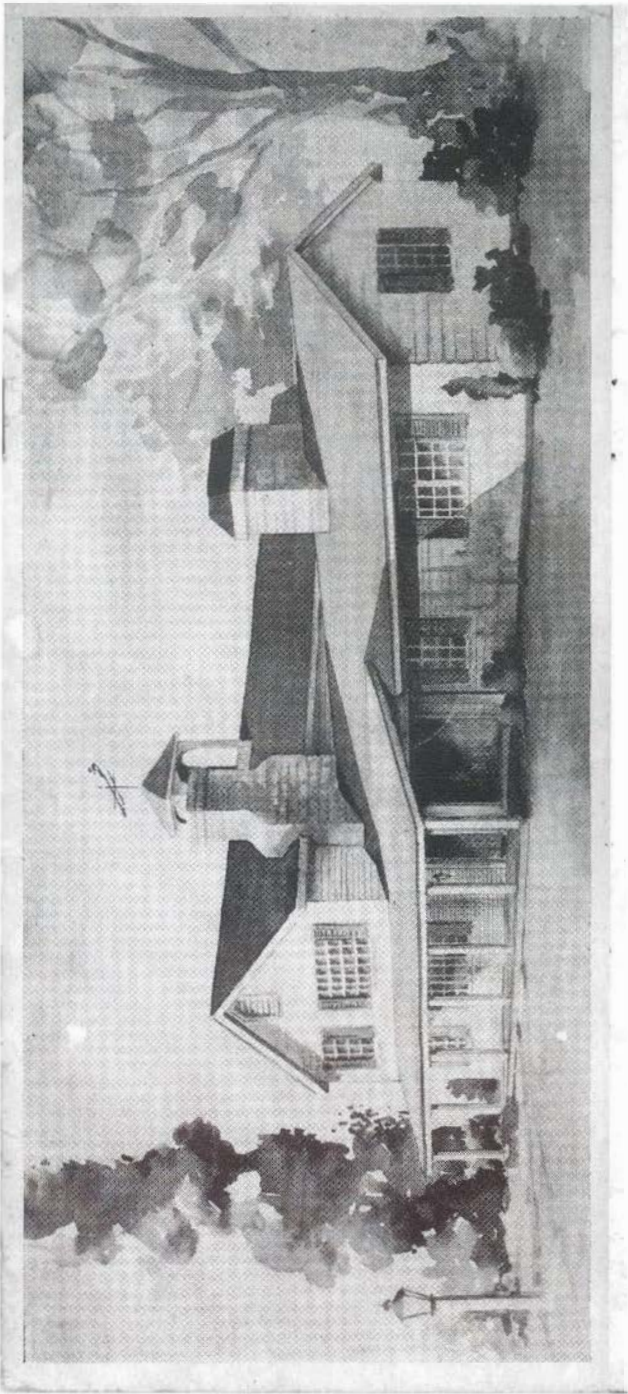
but when the carpenter asked if I knew who had been fooling with that floor joist, I knew I was in trouble. I couldn't bring myself to tell him I had done it. He wasn't laughing, or even smiling. I was silent, I couldn't speak. He knew! I couldn't lie, but I couldn't speak. I gave him a frightened, "I can't say no" look, and quickly walked away. I heard him chuckle as I headed for the dock. Needless to say, that was my last piece of carpentry work on the lodge.

My father was anxious to have the lodge completed by the start of ducking season. They had already made good advance bookings for the lodge. The last few weeks were unbelievable, but the project was completed on schedule.

For an accurate description of the lodge and its services, the brochure my father had printed for the islands gives a good picture of the entire operation.



When the lodge was finished, the furniture was brought out of storage at Lowe's Wharf and hauled to the island by barge.



Poplar Islands Lodge

The wild and lovely Poplar Islands are famous along Chesapeake Bay—famous for their wildfowling, for their fishing grounds, for their shelter, and for the men who have used them in the past. There are three of them, Poplar Island, Jefferson Island, and Coaches Island, enclosing a perfect harbor, known on the chart as Poplar Harbor, and locally as The Pot.

For many years Jefferson Island was the site of the Jefferson Islands Club, an organization composed entirely of Democratic statesmen and politicians. Almost all the bigwigs of that party and of our time belonged to the Club; and Presidents Roosevelt and Truman enjoyed its privileges.

In 1946 the Clubhouse burned to the ground, and it was not replaced. In 1948 George K. and Marion S. Bailey purchased Jefferson and Poplar Islands, and built Poplar Islands Lodge on the site of the old club house, which had previously been the site of the Valliant's trading post.

The Lodge has all modern comforts, and is still all that Lodge implies. Around it stretch the finest fishing grounds in the middle Chesapeake. And in the time of year when the big fireplaces are blazing, the wildfowler can look out from its windows (if he can stay indoors long enough) at swans, geese, brant and ducks by the hundreds and by the thousands.

The gifts of the great Chesapeake lie all around these islands for the taking. Soft and hard crabs, diamondback terrapin, oysters, striped bass, sea trout, Norfolk spot, hardheads and blues, all can be brought from under the water by the use of effort or skill or both; while above the water fly redheads, canvasbacks, broadbill, black ducks, mallard and widgeon, about all the deep water and marsh ducks. On a still day you can hear the wild swan, the grating call of the brant, and from out in the Narrows the liquid notes of the old-squaws. If you do not know how to take these gifts of the mighty Chesapeake, the men here at Poplar Island usually do, and they can show you and help you take them yourself.

The only folk out at the islands are the people of Poplar Islands Lodge. There are no crowds to push through. But if you must get in touch with the main, we have two-way radiotelephone; and big, able boats, suited to their work, to take you back and forth. The main is three miles away; and the boats dock at Lowes Landing, near the neat little town of Sherwood.

Aside from fishing and duck shooting, the shooting of liberated pheasant may be arranged; while at times crow shoots are held of a kind seldom seen anywhere. From thirty to sixty thousand crows roost on Poplar Island throughout all the cold months, streaming off from the mainland from late afternoon until dark. Hundreds of pounds of powder have been burned in these crow shoots.

For those who do not wish to fish or shoot, the islands offer many quiet pleasures. There are winding walks through the pine woods, coming out on secluded beaches; there are screened summer-houses in groves near the water's edge where you may lie in a hammock and read a book; and it is fun to mess about in the shallows with a crab net or row to the other islands. Boat trips may be arranged to beautiful nearby waters and towns, to Tilghman Island or Sharp's Island, the Choptank or Miles rivers, St. Michaels and Eastern Bay.

It is the business of the Lodge to give people a first class time, Island style, all the year around; and that it can do with joy in the doing.

There are seven double bedrooms for guests in the main house; while there is a comfortable little annex with four bedrooms, bath, living room and screened porch, which may be rented by the week.

In ducking season only six gunners are taken at one time, in order that the extensive grounds shall not be overshot. Two men are put to a blind, so that of the eleven blinds only three are shot a day. Bitter days a big boat with coffee and soup hot on its coal fire lies off where it may be signaled if a gunner gets too cold, or wishes to return to the Lodge for any reason.

If you are around the house between meals the steward will bring you bouillon or iced tea or orangeade. In the winter the bar and lounge fires burn brightly; while in summer the big screened porch takes every South West breeze from the water a short stone's throw away. Every room looks out over the playgrounds of the gulls and the wildfowl.

For gunning, fishing, or other reservations and for information write George K. Bailey, Poplar Islands Lodge, Sherwood, Maryland.

Lowe's Landing at Sherwood, where the Lodge boats dock, is twenty miles from the Eastern Shore town of Easton. To reach Lowe's Landing from Easton, take route 33 ten miles to St. Michaels, carry on through that town $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles to a left turn on the Tilghman Island road, drive $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles and make a right turn at a Poplar Islands Lodge sign. Lowe's Landing is about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile down this last road.

For last minute arrangements for ducking and fishing parties (at the Islands 48 hours would be considered "last minute") call Mrs. Varnon Haddaway of Sherwood, telephone number Tilghman 4225. Or you may call the Lodge direct, at somewhat greater expense, by radiotelephone.

Yours for fun afloat and ashore,

POPLAR ISLANDS LODGE.

It was truly a unique location. Accessibility was a problem or an asset, depending on how you look at it. Having grown up in the big city, my father loved getting away from it all. Even when I was on the mainland at Wickwire Farms, we were out in the “boonies,” and now we were on an island where we were the only permanent residents. For my first ten years, I did not know civilization as most children do.

CHAPTER SIX

MY SPECIAL FRIEND

One of my greatest joys was my bicycle. Although I had the opportunity to do many things that other kids did not, many recreational opportunities enjoyed by most kids were not available to me. Kids and bikes go together almost like adults and cars, but my bike was very special. It was my friend.

With the dock over six hundred feet long, which seemed like a mile to me, it was a great place to ride my bike. It was like my own private highway. I often rode all the way to the end of the dock, whenever we went to the mainland (including going to school), greeting visiting yachts, helping to carry groceries and supplies from the boats to the house, and for just plain fun.

When the weather was bad in the winter, particularly whenever the wind was blowing hard, it wasn't safe to ride my bike on the dock. I'd have to walk, sometimes using the railing on the east side when the wind was howling.

I rode my bike all over the island, from the lodge to the cottages, to the chicken house, down a path in the woods which my father grandly named Kings Highway, to the north end of the island, and anywhere I could get it to go.

One of my fondest memories was ordering things for my bike from Sears. On one occasion, I ordered a metal basket, a horn with a rubber squeeze ball, a pair of rubber handle bar covers with multi-colored tassels, a little round bell, a light, mud flaps, a mirror, and some reflectors. I don't know what I ordered the reflectors for. If I rode at night to the chicken house, or wherever, there certainly wouldn't be any car lights around to light up my reflectors, but I thought they were cool.



Our 612 ft. dock became my private highway for me and my bike.

It is hard to describe the excitement and anticipation I felt in ordering these things for my bike. I couldn't wait for the order to come. If I went to the mainland, I would run into the post office at Sherwood. If I was home on the island, whenever one of our boats would come, I would ride as fast as I could to the end of the dock to see if my Sears order had come. It seemed like months, but it was probably only a few weeks.

When it finally came, I ripped open the boxes and held my new possessions as if they were buried treasure.

My bike took on a whole new look. It felt different, it rode different, and even with all the extra weight, I think it was faster. I used the basket for carrying my lunch, which I would often eat at the other end of the island. In going to school, the basket was perfect for carrying my books to the end of the dock. And if I rode into the wind, I would get my handle bar tassels flying and making noise. The dock was always the best place for that.

My mother used to caution me to be careful. She was afraid I would ride off the dock into the water since there was a railing only on one side. I'm not sure why, but I never did ride off the dock. I came close a few times. Although I feel that my parents took good care of me, they allowed me a lot of freedom, and I didn't feel that I had a bunch of senseless restrictions.

A bicycle is a special part of a child's life, but it was even more to me. It was my friend and constant companion. I took very good care of my bicycle, undoubtedly affected by an earlier experience. I'll never forget when my parents gave me my first bicycle at Wickwire. I must have been about six years old. It was new and shiny and it had training wheels. I was so happy. My Dad got me started, and off I went. I didn't need any old training wheels and insisted that they be taken off after my first ride.

Not too long before we left Wickwire, tragedy struck. I often kept my bike in one of the big sheds where one of the tractors was kept. One morning, one of the men started up the tractor in gear. It lunged forward and smashed my bike. A part of me was gone, and my mother had her hands full comforting me and wiping away my tears.

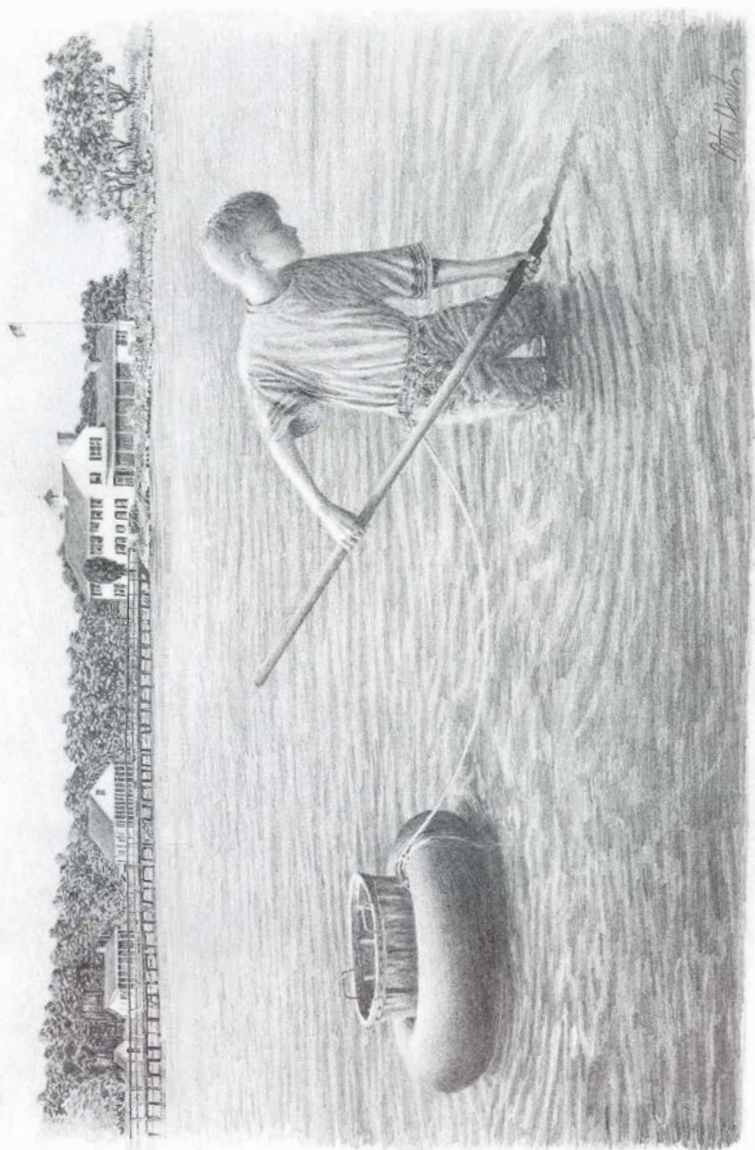
CHAPTER SEVEN

MY GREATEST LOVE

Of all the many pleasures at Poplar Island, the one that I probably enjoyed the most was crabbing. And we crabbed only one way; well, almost one way. The most original, most difficult and most exciting way to crab is to wade through the water with your net before you; searching the grass. I bet I caught more crabs in one summer than any other eight-year-old in the world.

Although we all crabbed some, the only other real enthusiast was my brother, Andy. He and I would spend hours and hours crabbing. For the shorter expeditions, one to two hours or less, we would use a bushel basket and an inner tube to hold our catch. We would use a half bushel basket, placed inside the larger basket, to separate the soft crabs. Old tennis shoes protected our feet, and we would wear a pair of old pants because we didn't like wading through the sea grass without some protection for our legs.

With the baskets tied to our belt loops by six to eight feet of string, we would set out from the dock area and head



*My greatest love.
Drawing by Peter Hanks.*

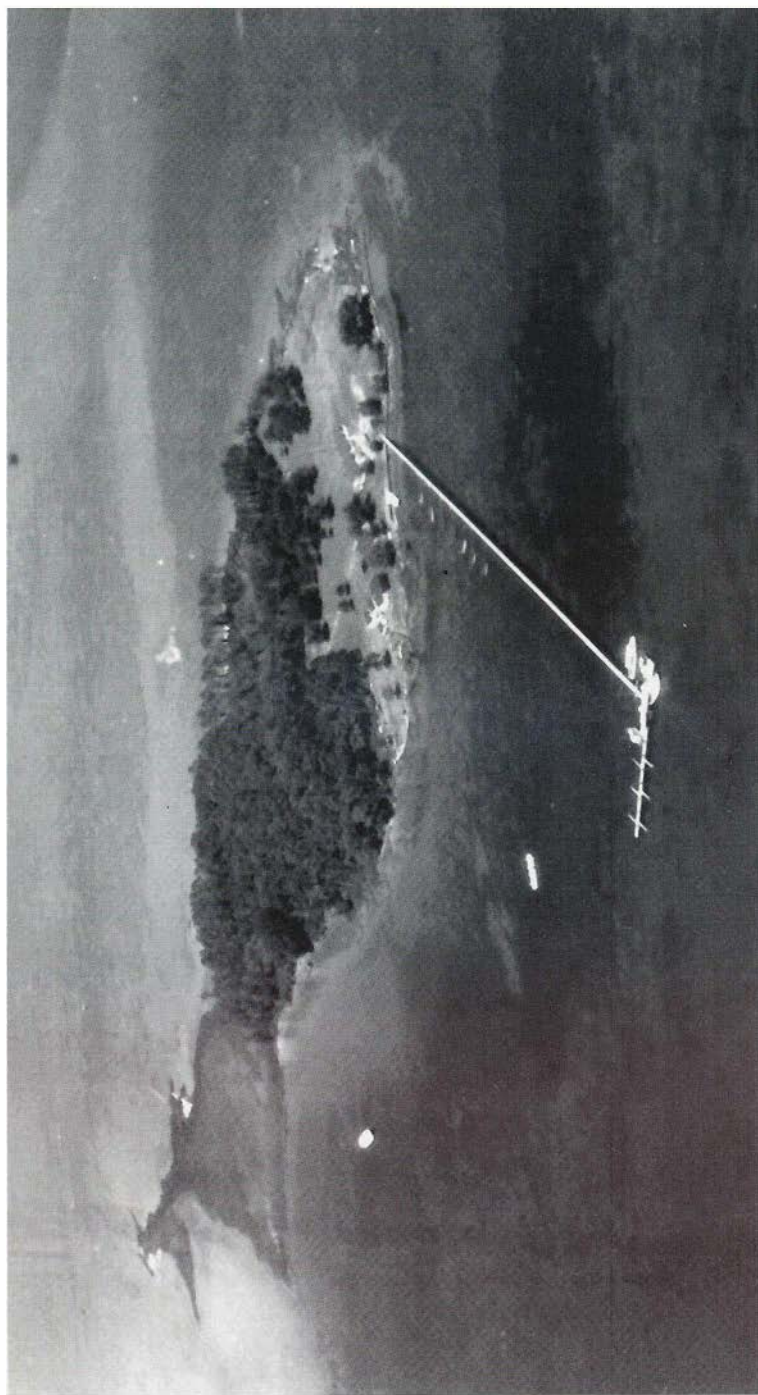
southeast counterclockwise around the island. And we're talking about Jefferson Island, which was about thirty five to forty acres in size. Our nets were sturdy with long wooden handles and a steel bow with sturdy cotton twine netting. I believe Dad bought them on Tilghman Island, but Andy and I would keep the nets repaired ourselves. We took good care of our nets because we didn't like any crabs to get away.

There was plenty of grass in those days. Since soft crabs were usually the most sought after, we would plan our day around hitting the water two to three hours before low tide. The peelers (which is what the crabs are called as they are preparing to shed their shells and become soft crabs) came in on the high tide to shed and would be in their shedding cycle on the falling tide.

Between the dock and the first point, the bottom was relatively hard and kind of shelly. By shelly, I mean there were a lot of oyster shells partially embedded in the bottom. Not the best bottom conditions for your net, but the grass was thick and there were plenty of crabs.

It is along this stretch of shore where we first tried out the big shrimp nets. Dad and Captain Bunzy would use grass shrimp for chumming on the fishing parties, and you could catch these tiny shrimp in the seaweed around our shores. I'll never forget. Dad got these two big nets with long handles and wooden frames about three feet square that had rollers on the bottom of the frame. The netting was tight enough to hold the small shrimp. You simply put the net on the bottom and pushed it through the grass, collecting the shrimp. You couldn't push it too slowly because a lot of the shrimp could dart out of the net.

Frankly, at my size, those nets were a bit much. But I'll never forget when we first tried them out. We pushed them fifty feet or so through the grass, pulled them out of the water, and not only were there a lot of grass shrimp in them, there were also three or four beautiful soft crabs. I



Our crabbing territory can be seen in its entirety in this aerial view of Jefferson Island. The best crabbing flats in the world were on the top side of the island at the left end of the woods.

was amazed. I wondered if Andy's and my crabbing business was being revolutionized with these new nets. But I soon realized there was nothing to worry about. The nets were too big and very impractical. They would never work for chasing a big Jimmy crab across the flats. They were great for shrimp, and if there were just-shed soft crabs in the grass that couldn't run, it appears from our first experiment, it could really pull those in. But after the novelty wore off, I figured that those big nets would take all the challenge out of crabbing, and I could just see the rollers rolling on top of a "just-shed softie" and mushing him into crab heaven.

Having gotten carried away with this first stretch of shoreline and the grass shrimp experience, it's time to get back to the real crabbing with our trusty old bow nets. As we rounded the first point and headed around to the north, the bottom became better and so did the grass. It wasn't as thick so you could see more what was going on along the bottom. You worked your sturdy net through the clumps of grass keeping the net firmly against the bottom. If there was a soft crab in your net, you probably wouldn't even know you had him until you pulled your net up. But if it was a hard crab, most likely he would dart through the grass in search of safer cover. You had to be quick and aggressive to catch him and often had to chase him around for minutes before you finally made the catch. The crabs were smart. If there was any mud churned up by your net or lunging feet, the crab would dart into the mud swirl where you couldn't see him. It was time then to go on to the next clump of clean grass.

For those who have not been fortunate enough to crab the "real way", it is important to understand the shedding cycle of the crab.

The hard shell comes loose at the back and the soft crab inside ever so slowly works its way out of the back.



The greatest crabbing flats were off this beach. Tilghman Island can barely be seen on the far horizon.

The crab needs movement in the water from the tide to help shed its shell. If the bustner, or shedding crab, is placed in a bucket of water, for example, with no movement of water, it will most likely die.

Once the soft crab is free from its shell, it literally cannot move. Its skin is still wrinkled and it is totally defenseless. At this stage, you can pick the beautiful soft shell up with your hand. The wrinkles will probably be gone within a half hour, and believe it or not, the soft crab is about a third larger than the shell he just left behind.

The crab's new shell quickly begins to harden, passing through what is called the paper-shell stage, and becoming fully hard within a few hours. Full mobility is regained rapidly after the wrinkles are gone. A paper-shell will even try to bite you, but he is not going to do any damage. The soft shell crab is an internationally-known delicacy. The steamed hard crab is cherished far and near. No crab aficionado has any use for paper shells. Thank goodness they don't remain in this stage for long.

As we continued around the island, we came upon what was then the best crabbing flats in the world. On the back side of the island to the northeast, off the sandy beach, was a stretch of hard bottom "flats". When the breeze was calm, the water was clear enough to see at least fifty feet. With the tide near low, we would be wading in water from one-foot depth near shore to two-and-a-half feet or so further out. The beautiful clumps of sea grass were much more widespread on the flats, with totally bare stretches of bottom in between the clumps. The water was so clear then, the grass so inviting. No wonder there were so many crabs.

Running your net through the prized thickets of grass was a new thrill every time. You never knew exactly what would happen. If a big Jimmy darted out ahead of your net into the open, it was a mad dash to run him down. But on this type of bottom, if he doubled back on you before you

could get him in your net, he'd be lost in the mud and sand swirl, and he would be the victor. On to a new patch of unreddened grass. What fun!

Then you may come upon a "shed", upside down, barely visible in the grass. Sure enough, a few inches away was the beautiful "softie". Carefully you would scoop him up and place him in the small basket, covering him up with some grass to keep him alive.

Andy and I had such great fun crabbing. We would kid each other about who had the most, the biggest, or who made the toughest catch. Often, we would end our expedition at the end of the flats, where the bottom turned redder at the north end of the island. The baskets were heavy and we would have to stop often to rest as we walked back home on Kings Highway through the big pine woods.

On our longer expeditions, we would go all the way around the island. And believe it or not, we would pull the smallest row boat behind us, for the baskets just weren't big enough for our catch. We would take turns pulling the boat, and whoever didn't have the boat pulled a basket so he wouldn't have to wade to the boat every time he caught a crab. On one of our round-the-island days, I can remember something like eleven dozen hard crabs, five dozen soft crabs, and two dozen peelers.

Wading for crabs was the greatest. But in the late summer, when crabs started swimming on top of the water, can you imagine what it was like having a six-hundred-foot dock? I could walk up and down that dock at flood tide and catch a bushel of crabs in no time. Boy, was that fun too!

We were always eating crabs, and there were plenty to serve the guests. I would sell soft crabs by the dozen or half dozen to yachts that visited the Pot or came into the Lodge. (The Pot was our name for the natural harbor formed by the three islands.) I had an invoice I kept for many years. Unfortunately, I misplaced it. I wrote it on a plain piece of

lined school paper. It looked something like this:

1 dozen soft crabs 50¢

One day, for some reason or other, Andy went crabbing and I didn't go. It was around midday, and I was doing something in the yard near the cottages when I heard someone screaming. I looked up and saw Andy running up Kings Highway out of the woods, shouting like crazy. He was still quite far away, and I couldn't understand what he was screaming.

I couldn't imagine what was wrong. I instinctively ran to meet my brother, to see if he needed help. As we neared each other, I saw his wet crabbing pants and sneakers and a string was half flying and half dragging off his waist. That was obviously the string that had been tied to his inner tube and crab basket. What was wrong? I still couldn't understand what he was trying to say. I heard something that sounded like "turtle, giant turtle."

Andy was totally out of breath. I still couldn't understand what he was saying. I told him to calm down, catch his breath, and try to tell me exactly what was wrong. He said, "You wouldn't believe it, there was a giant turtle!"

"What do you mean a giant turtle? Where?" I said. He was still trying to catch his breath. He had been running full speed. "Where is your net, where is your basket?" I asked.

"They're on the beach, I left them, I was scared," he gasped.

"Andy, slow down, tell me what happened," I said.

By this time, my sister, Sally, appeared, and Andy became even more excited. He said "You wouldn't believe it; I thought it was a rock. I stepped on it; but it wasn't a rock, it was a giant turtle!" He was talking so fast, and he was so out of breath, it was hard to understand him.

"Where, where?" Sally asked.

Still out of breath, Andy said, excitedly, "I was crabbing off the beach. I saw what looked like a big rock. I waded over to get a closer look, I stepped on it, and it moved, it moved! I saw its head and its feet. It was a giant turtle."

"How giant?" I asked.

"Three feet, it had to be three feet," he insisted, as he held up his hands roughly three feet apart. "I was scared to death. I leaped backwards. It was coming towards me. I ran out of the water. The string broke when the basket hit the shore. I dropped my net and ran all the way back here," he continued.

Sally said, "Andy, three feet? Come on! We've never seen a turtle around here bigger than one foot."

"It's true, I knew you wouldn't believe me. It was at least three feet," he hesitated, then said, "Maybe a little less, but not much. With his head and tail, he was at least three feet."

I said, "Andy, I believe you, let's go see if he's still there."

Sally said, "I've got things to do, I haven't got time to look for your silly old sea turtle."

"Let's go, Pete," Andy said. "We'll find it." We trotted down Kings Highway through the woods and out onto the beach. There was Andy's net on the beach. The inner tube and basket were sitting there in three or four inches of water, his crabs still there. Since I didn't have my crabbing shoes on, I wasn't anxious to go in the water. I asked Andy where he had seen it, and he said "out there about fifty feet" pointing straight out.

"I don't see anything. Go out there and see if he's still there," I said.

"He's probably gone, but he was there, I tell you, he was there," Andy said emphatically.

He slowly waded out, obviously apprehensive of what

he might find. The water was clear enough to see at least ten to fifteen feet. There was almost no breeze. Andy said, "His color is a lot like the bottom. I don't want to step on him." He waded around very slowly, peering into the water.

"Do you see anything?" I asked.

"Not yet," he replied. "I saw him, I really did," he mumbled as he began to wade a little faster. He waded around for about five minutes with his eyes fixed on the bottom, then turned and headed ashore.

He walked up on the beach and said, "Let's go home, I guess he's out to Bloody Point by now. Pete, I wish you could have seen him." Andy picked up his crab net. We each took a handle of his basket of crabs and headed up the path towards home, his feet making a squishing noise in his wet tennis shoes. As we walked slowly up Kings Highway, I said "Andy, I believe you, I wish I could have seen him too."

CHAPTER EIGHT

LEARNING TO SHOOT

Since my father was so devoted to hunting, he thought that everyone in the family should know how to shoot and properly handle a gun. When I was eight, Dad felt that I was ready to learn. Out of more than thirty guns he owned, he picked the Winchester 410 pump for me.

He took me out in the large yard to the north of the house with the 410 and a box of shells. He knelt down and began explaining the parts of the gun and how the gun worked. He showed me how to take it apart and clean it. He explained how the shells were made and how the firing pin in the gun caused the shell to fire.

"There are two things you must never forget," he said. "Number one is to never, never point the gun at anything you don't intend to shoot. Never, at any time, even just moving the gun, loaded or unloaded, never point it at anything you don't intend to shoot. And number two, never assume the gun is not loaded unless you have checked it carefully. If it has been out of your sight, someone else could

have loaded it without your knowing it." He asked me to repeat these two rules several times.

Then he showed me the different ways to carry the gun, how to hold it and aim it, again emphasizing that in moving and carrying the gun, that the barrel never be pointed at anyone. I was feeling pretty grown up.

It was now time to learn loading and unloading, and putting the safety on and off. Dad loaded three shells and pumped one into the chamber, flicked the safety off as he brought it up to his shoulder, and fired. Bang! I was very excited. I was next. He put the safety on and handed the gun carefully to me.

Dad cautioned, "There will be some kick. Hold it firmly to your shoulder. Take off the safety. Aim out over the water and shoot." I was nervous, but anxious to shoot. I pulled the 410 up to my shoulder, clicked off the safety, aimed out over the water and pulled the trigger. Boy, what a thrill! It hurt a little, but I was so excited, I hardly noticed. I asked if I could fire another. "Sure," he said. I pumped with the gun still to my shoulder and fired again. It wasn't hard for Dad to tell how excited I was. He handed me three more shells. I knelt down on one knee and loaded the three shells as I had been taught, taking care to put the safety on before I started. Dad gave me the go ahead to fire them.

I was still somewhat nervous but fairly confident. I had watched Daddy handle his guns many times before. I pulled the 410 up to my shoulder again, pretended that I was aiming at a duck and squeezed the trigger. Got him! I felt some kick from the gun but I could take it. For the next shot, I moved the gun barrel as if following a duck. Bang, another dead duck. For the third shot, I followed a make-believe duck the other way and fired. Oops, I missed. What excitement! I felt like a man, a real hunter.



My Teacher

Few men had a shotgun in their hands as much as my dad.

I wanted to shoot more, but Dad said we would call it a day. "Perhaps tomorrow we can shoot again, this time at some targets," he said. I pumped the 410 two or three times and looked in the chamber to make sure there were no shells left in the gun, just as I had been taught. I was on cloud nine as we headed back to the lodge.

Back at the house, Dad got a cleaning kit out of the gun cabinet and showed me how to clean the gun. Dad went out with me a few more times before he let me go out on my own, but with very strict rules. Being able to go hunting on my own at that young age was an incredible feeling. It may be quite surprising to some that my father would allow me to do that, but he trained me well, and trusted me.

After my first solo, it may be even more shocking to learn what took place. I had put the gun away and was in my room. Dad came by and asked how it went. "Great," I said. Dad then asked if I was sure I had emptied the gun. "Sure, I'm sure," I said.

"Come with me please," he said. He walked to our family room where the 410 was kept in a gun rack, as I followed. I didn't know what was going on, as he said, "Let's check the gun, I want to be sure." I knew there were no shells in the gun. What was he doing? "You took the 410, right?" he asked.

"Yes sir," I replied. He carefully removed the gun from the rack, pumped it, and out flew a shell. I watched the shell hit the floor in shock. I was almost crying and could hardly talk. "Dad," I said, "I know I emptied the gun."

He said quietly, "I know you're sure, son, but remember everything I taught you." He handed me the gun and slowly walked out of the room. I was still in shock.

I looked in the chamber, pumped and pumped, put my finger in the shell chamber. There were no more shells. I started to put the gun away, then I brought it back and checked again. After putting the gun away, I went to my

room and laid on my bed. I felt like the wind had been knocked out of me and my mind was very confused. Then I started to put it together. My father had put that shell in there to teach me that you are never sure a gun is empty unless you have checked it and not let it out of your sight — a lesson I have never forgotten.

Dangerous? Not really. I know my father wouldn't have taken any chances. After giving me the 410, no one else was allowed to use it. After putting the shell in, he had come right to my room, because I hadn't been back more than five minutes. I never asked him how it got there, and he never said another word about it. Next time we talked, I could tell that he knew I had figured it out. With facial expressions, there was an exchange of understanding — lesson taught, lesson learned!

I have always had the greatest respect for guns and safety, and I learned it all from my father.

CHAPTER NINE

GETTING TO SCHOOL

For most kids, getting to school becomes part of life's routine, with very little occurring that might be classified as exciting or new and different. Getting to school from the island would be classified more like a "unique experience".

Although only about three miles to the mainland as the crow flies, we had to allow about an hour and a half to get to school. We figured fifteen minutes to get out to the end of the dock and get aboard the boat. Thirty minutes were allowed to get the boat started, untied, make the three miles across Poplar Island Narrows to Lowes Wharf, and get her tied up. Another fifteen minutes to get the car started, warmed up, and drive up to the general store at Sherwood. Of course, we had to allow at least ten minutes waiting for the school bus so as not to cut it too close. And then another twenty minutes with stops for the bus to get to the Tilghman Elementary School. My brothers and sister had to go even a longer distance by bus to St. Michaels. If the weather was

bad, you can imagine what that did to our schedule.

If the weather wasn't bad, I would ride my bicycle to the end of the dock. That would save me time, but then I would just have to wait for my brothers and sister, or Dad or Captain Bunzy if they were taking us. My oldest brother, Hugh, was old enough to run the boats, and he would often take us if the boat was not needed for something else during the day.

The trip on the boat, of course, was the most exciting. When the weather was warm, it was great. The sun rising, the wildlife, the crabbers or oystermen, the skipjacks — it was always something different. When it was cold, it was still beautiful, but not so much fun. And when it was cold and windy, it was downright impossible to get out of bed, knowing what you were going to have to face.

Even though the Bay froze over many times through the years, unfortunately for me, our time at the islands was during a period when the Bay did not freeze. I rarely had to miss a day of school because of the weather. There were times when there was skim ice in the shallower water, and sometimes quite far out. But we had copper on the forward water lines of the boats, and we could go through the skim ice with no problems. But boy, when it was windy and cold, the wind off the Bay would go right through you if you didn't have ample layers of warm clothes.



The Marion, one of our boats that provided transportation to and from the mainland.

Sometimes there was ice on the decks, making it very difficult to board the boat and handle lines. There were many mornings when I wished the boat would not start.

But all in all, it was another pleasant experience at my young age with little real responsibility. Waiting at Rowlenson's General Store for the bus was another experience. I was one of their best customers for candy after school. I know my parents didn't want me eating a lot of candy, but believe me, I had my share. Our little store in Sherwood had some of the best Reese Cups in the country. Once I was on the bus, the trip became more routine.

At school, I was a little different. I wasn't exactly a foreigner, but I came from farther away than anyone else, and it took me a lot longer to get there. Many of my classmates were curious about what it was like to live "out on the island." From time to time, I was allowed to invite a friend out for the weekend.

The schedule for getting to school was more important, for we had to get ashore in time to meet the buses. But coming home was not quite as predictable as to when we would get picked up. If the boats were being used for hunting or fishing, as they often were, there might not be a boat available at the exact time we were ready to be picked



*Heading west out of Knapp's Narrows.
Although I attended Tilghman
Elementary School, we went ashore at
Lowe's Wharf near Sherwood.*

up. Hence, more time at the general store.

There was a nice bench under the overhang in front of the store, where I logged a lot of time. I sat there waiting for the bus in the morning, but after school is when I really spent a lot of time on what Mr. Rowleson always called "Peter's bench". When I was waiting there to be picked up, I would often do my homework, so I'd be free when I got home. I might also walk up and down the road pitching stones, but the bench was my favorite place at the general store.

For years after we left the islands, whenever I would go through Sherwood on the way to Tilghman, I would look at that bench and get a little weak in my heart. I will never forget going to school by boat.



Occasionally I was allowed to have a friend over from the mainland.

CHAPTER TEN

CAPTAIN BUNZY

Varnon E. Haddaway (Captain Bunzy), or just “Bunzy”, was my father’s right hand man. He was an experienced waterman, hunting guide, and fishing guide. He had worked for the Jefferson Islands Club up until the time it burned. He and his wife were asleep in the caretaker’s cottage the night it caught fire. They were awakened by the crackling sound of the flames, but could do nothing but watch it burn to the ground. Captain Bunzy’s wife swore she would never set foot on the islands again.

When Dad bought Poplar and Jefferson Islands early in 1948, he located and hired Captain Bunzy immediately (having heard that his expertise as a guide and waterman was practically legendary). Captain Bunzy was invaluable to my father and mother, and he quickly became one of the family. He took us back and forth to school. He carried guests back and forth. He took fishing parties, and he was an excellent hunting guide. Captain Bunzy put in a lot of

hours and helped my father in every conceivable way. I remember him as always being pleasant.

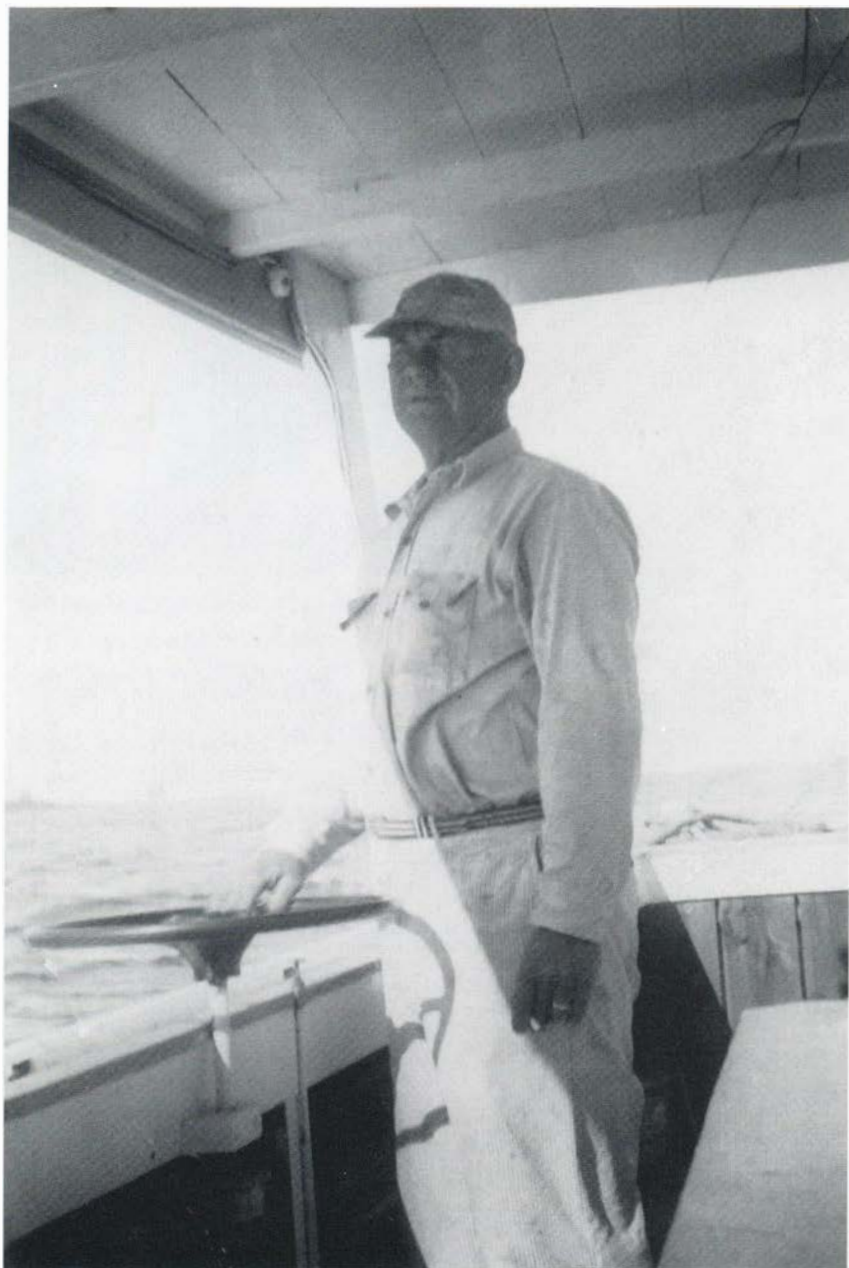
There were some funny things about Bunzy. He wouldn't eat "anything that lived in the sea, or flew over it." That was certainly strange for a native and always hard to understand. He explained one day that when he was a boy, he had gotten up on a picking table in a crab house and stuffed crab meat in his mouth until he got sick. I don't know

what getting sick of crab meat had to do with not liking fish and waterfowl, but he said it was the odor. With so much seafood and waterfowl in our home, it made it awfully difficult to feed him. There was one notable exception to his general dislike for fish and fowl, and that was the infamous old waterman's dish appropriately named "Go Away". In an attempt to get us to like his dish, he would personally prepare Go Away for us, but it never caught on with me. Go Away was a mixture of codfish, mashed potatoes, onions, and a few other secret ingredients. I used to choke on it, politely of course.

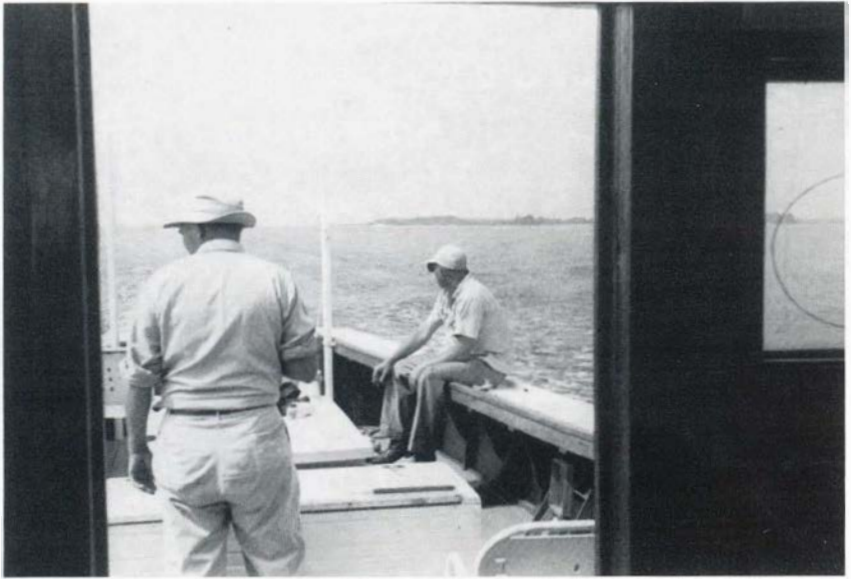
Another funny thing about Captain Bunzy was his dislike of canoes. He wouldn't get near one. He called them Indian canoes in a very distasteful manner. Asked to explain, he said that he got in one once and it flipped him into the water so fast that he didn't know what had happened. He would utter under his breath whenever



Captain Bunzy and my dad on the Marion coming out of Knapp's Narrows.



Captain Bunzy at the wheel of the Sally Anne.



A rare shot of "Bunzy", doing nothing, with my dad.

near a canoe, "Damn Indian canoes."

Captain Bunzy was a very special man. He loved my father, and he was such a help to my mother when my father became seriously ill. My mother thought the world of Bunzy, as we all did. He was truly one of the family.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

WATERFOWL HUNTING

My father fulfilled a dream in buying an island and building a hunting lodge. His love of waterfowl hunting started as a boy when his father first took him to his friend's hunting lodge on Great South Bay, Long Island. Dad's boyhood diary was filled with references to Captain Wilbur Corwin's duck camp. They would go there often, but not often enough for my father.

When Daddy was not at Captain Will's camp, he was day-dreaming of being there. So many days in his diary ended with "thoughts of my idea of Paradise — Captain Will's duck camp." Another day ended with, "At night I lie awake dreaming of being out on the marshes at Wilbur's and watching the sun rise, or of standing on the top of a dune and watching the moon-lit sea, with Dad; looking forward to a day on the marshes after ducks and geese."

After graduating from Harvard, his father having recently died, Dad and his mother purchased a most desirable property on the Chesapeake Bay (which he later named

Wickwire Farms). What a hunter's dream! My grandmother's diary described so beautifully their adventure in creating Wickwire Farms with frequent references to Dad's devotion to hunting.

1

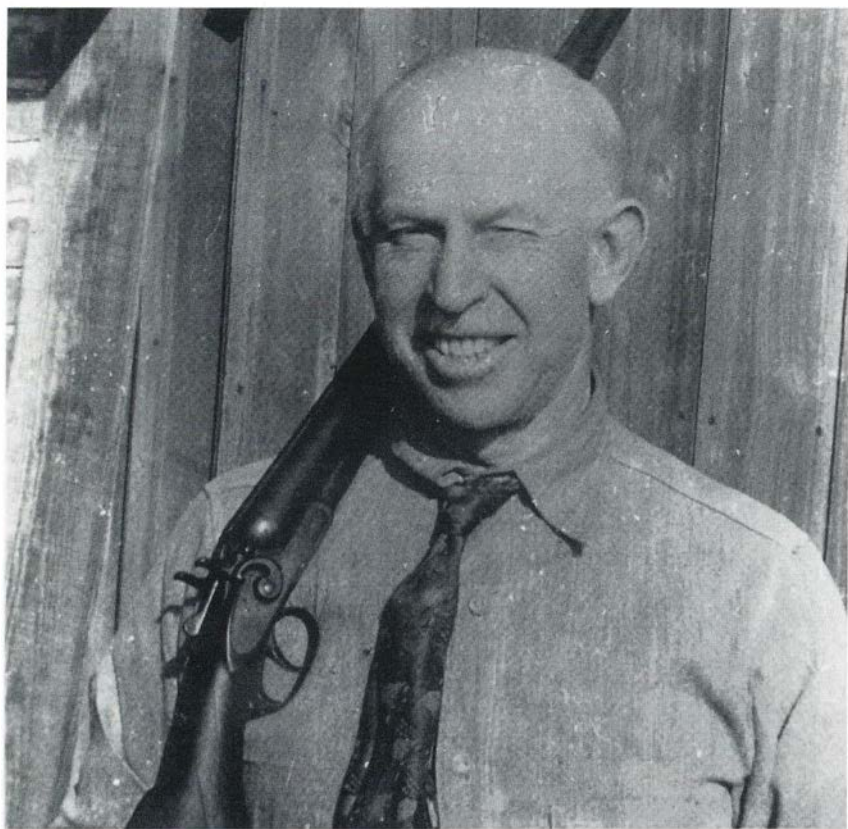
Saturday Jan 1

Came over last night, (to Willbur Corwin's duck camp) on the Mobile Jule. Awoke about 5 this morning, as Will opened the door. Sat down to a breakfast of pancakes and sausages, with Cap'n Will, Benny Hawkins, Charlie Donald, Mrs. Corwin, and Perry Biglow. A little ice on flats, so went down marshes with Perry to Point of Inlet. Had two shots on way. Both Perry and I gave down two larks apiece. Missed both. Benny waiting at Point. Many flights of ducks going to ocean, about 9.30. One bird to stalk. Brought him down, but could not find him. Went out to Little Ridge with Corwin. Dinner at 11.30. A few geese, all high flyers in afternoon. No more birds along. Bad shooting! Went back to Bellport, and to the Rodmans. Supper, bed, etc!

A page from my dad's boyhood diary describes his love for Captain Will's duck camp.

Waterfowl hunting was an integral part of my father's life. His guns, decoys, hunting boats, and other equipment were considered critically important and handled with meticulous care. Even more important were his friends. He derived the greatest pleasure from inviting his friends and relatives to enjoy hunting with him.

The oldest, and most special, was Captain Wilbur Corwin (my grandfather's guide and great friend at the Corwin duck camp on Long Island). He was an absolute



Captain Wilbur Corwin, my father's close friend since boyhood. This gentleman was a hunter, hunting guide, and decoy carver that would surely be in the Hall of Fame, if they had one for outdoor sportsmen.

prince of a man, the epitome of a hunter, and a decoy carver of the first order. I thought the world of Captain Will — the thing I liked the best about him was that he could tell a bedtime story like no one else ever could — my favorites were about the grizzly bears.

I'll never forget this one day, for some reason, I had nailed a small piece of two by four to the dock near one of the ladders around where the row boats were moored. Captain Will came along, saw the piece of wood, and tried to kick the block into the water. Only the block didn't budge, and he stubbed his toe. Somehow he must have known who was responsible. I was searched out and given a talking to.

Captain Will made and painted most of Daddy's decoys. His

working decoys *Dad and Captain Bunzy, again. The engine muffler provided a great hand warmer.*

were painted with full feather detail, similar to decorative decoys of the present. We were told that my father was one of the first to use such life-like detail for whole working rigs of decoys. For added realism, he would add a few swan decoys in with the ducks.

I remember my father hunting constantly. He filled several log books with a record of each day's hunting, which has made for very interesting reading by the family.



41

9

7th November -

Ordinary Pt., Money Creek - 1 Widgeon

47 Pintail

total 48

Remarks - Ed., Capt. Will + myself. Wind variable to fresh to heavy W., tide very high. Steady beautiful leads of birds. Picked up at 1:00 o'clock - on rather wet Andy + Henry go in the blind for an hour. They killed 8 more ducks, 5 Pintail + 3 Widgeon. King is the finest working dog I have ever seen - he is I believe about as near perfect as a working retriever can be - great strength, stamina, intelligence and obedience. We never had a shot at a Black Duck. Willis gunned the other side, but killed few. I cannot praise King too much - these Chesapokes are perfect dogs for their job. Greener.

Our record on Pintail to date.

51	251
	<p>12th March - Vallaint Pt - 1 cygnet The Pot - 3 Swam total 4</p> <p>Remarks - 7 Billed the cygnet, bound onto the point in a N.W. wind. At night the wind went down, and Andy, the Capt. Will and I got the three with the old light, I pushing.</p> <p>Still many Swam here a few hundred canvas in the Pot, about 2000 crow-bills, some Sheldrake, blacks, whistlers - most of the widgion & red head have gone on.</p>
51	253
	<p>15th March S. Pt. Sand Bar - 6 Swam</p> <p>Remarks - Overcast night, light S. breezy. I pushed Cotts. Will & Buncie to 'em with the old light.</p> <p>Next day got one nipple, a cygnet - 2 of the 6 were cygnets. About 700 to 800 Swams now using the islands islands, not counting coasles.</p>
	<p>19th March - 1 Sheldrake on a loose overhead shot. Andy got a black duck yesterday, a crow bill & a widgion the day before.</p>

Some pages from Dad's hunting log at Poplar Island.

The first part of November we sent six of our animals to an Aberdeen-Angus show, at which we took two first places, reserve grand championship for a female and won a much coveted trophy.

Shortly before the ducking season opened this year, George and Marion made an all day trip in our big truck in order to bring home, without injury, a beautiful scooter which had been built for George by two old-time boatmen and duckers, friends of his early sailing and shooting days. The tiny craft had been built with the greatest precision and painted in the most particular manner, with the finest paint procurable, by hands that were ever more than willing to do something which would augment the sport of their one-time pupil and always devoted friend.

George said that the boat must be christened; so he took his whole family, including the small son, down to the creek. The scooter was christened the Wildfowler in the juice of a Blue Point oyster, George having just received a barrel of them, raked from the waters of his early sailing days. The small boy was then placed in the little craft, and it was slid down the ways, its tiny occupant looking a bit scared but making a great effort to bear himself like an admiral.

Before I lived on a dirt road I had taken good roads as a matter of course; but since I have lived upon something resembling a trail more than a road, I have had profound sympathy for all dwellers along these would-be roads. We and our neighbors have been stuck in the mud so many times that I can hardly bear the sound which comes to one's ears when the engine grinds and grinds in its efforts to extricate the feet of its mudplastered body from the deep ruts. My three year old grandson has, like his granny, almost an obsession upon the subject; in his play he invariably has a car "tuck in the mud."

I have spent much time and energy pleading and arguing for improvement in this condition, and have finally, this autumn, been rewarded by something which can almost be called a road.

A page from Grandmother's diary, describing the acquisition of Dad's hunting boat, the "Wildfowler", which is pictured on page 7.

After many years at Wickwire hunting with his friends, the move to Poplar Islands changed hunting into a means of making a living as well as the great personal enjoyment that he always cherished. As part of the lodge operation, eleven duck blinds were constructed at various strategic locations around the two islands, as described in other chapters.

Once I learned to shoot, my father started taking me hunting when he went with friends. Before I was allowed to shoot at incoming ducks, my assignment was to shoot cripples on the water. One cold windy day we were in a shore blind on the southern tip of Poplar facing northeast on the Pot. I used a big bucket turned upside down to stand on so I could see over the blind. My feet were very cold and I was sitting back on the seat with one boot off trying to warm my feet.

All of a sudden I hear "mark". A flock of ducks came in over the decoys from the left and everyone shot. As I was pulling on my boot, my father yelled, "Peter, two cripples!" I grabbed my gun and jumped up on the bucket. Dad pointed out the two cripples. I was very excited and nervous, having been called into action from warming my feet, but I was able to finish off the two cripples with two shots. I was very proud, and so was my father.

CHAPTER TWELVE

OUR FIRST CHRISTMAS

Aunt Anne and Aunt Elizabeth (who we all called Libbis, because my sister couldn't pronounce her name when she was small) had come all the way down from Northfield, Massachusetts. We had found a pretty pine tree in the woods, which was put up in the lounge. The tree must have been at least ten feet tall because it extended beyond the wooden beam of the cathedral ceiling. Anne and Libbis helped Mom, Sally and me with decorating. We had lots of pine and holly, and the tree looked beautiful.

Stockings were hung in our private living room on the mantle over the fireplace. Mom and Dad helped me. Dad explained that Santa Claus gets cold and hungry during his long trip, and that he would very much appreciate some cookies and a shot of bourbon. Mom got me a handful of cookies, which I placed on a small plate on the hearth. I also left a napkin. And Dad got me a shot glass, which he filled with bourbon. I placed it carefully next to the plate of cookies. They then tucked me in bed and I fell asleep.



One of the centers of family activity at the lodge, the kitchen. At the near end, out of view, was a large dining area. Piggy and Poppy, staring at the camera, tore the wrappings off the Christmas presents during the night.

with thoughts of Santa Claus riding his sleigh high over the Chesapeake and landing it on our little island atop the lodge. I wondered how he would know which chimney to come down.

I awoke early the next morning, before everyone else, and ran to see if the stockings were filled. Sure enough, they were overflowing. The bourbon was gone, there was half a cookie left with some crumbs, and the napkin was crumpled up like it had been used. And there was a little note in handwriting quite difficult to read. It said, "Thanks Peter, Merry Christmas, Santa." Boy, was I thrilled.

I was not allowed to go into the lounge where the tree and presents were, until everyone else was up. I got dressed and ran outside to see if there were any signs of Santa and his reindeer having been there. I looked around

the yard and up on the roof, but saw nothing. When I went back in, most of the family was up.

After opening our stockings, we ate breakfast, then went in to start opening presents. As we walked in the room, we were shocked by what we saw. The dogs had gotten into the presents and had a real field day, having pulled off the paper from the gifts, chewed it up and tossed it around the room. What a mess! Fortunately, the gifts were still intact.

Santa was good to everyone. I was so anxious to open all my presents, but Mom and Dad made us open one at a time so we could all enjoy each other's gifts. There were gifts from Santa as well as gifts we had given to each other. Most of mine were from Santa. It was a wonderful Christmas.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

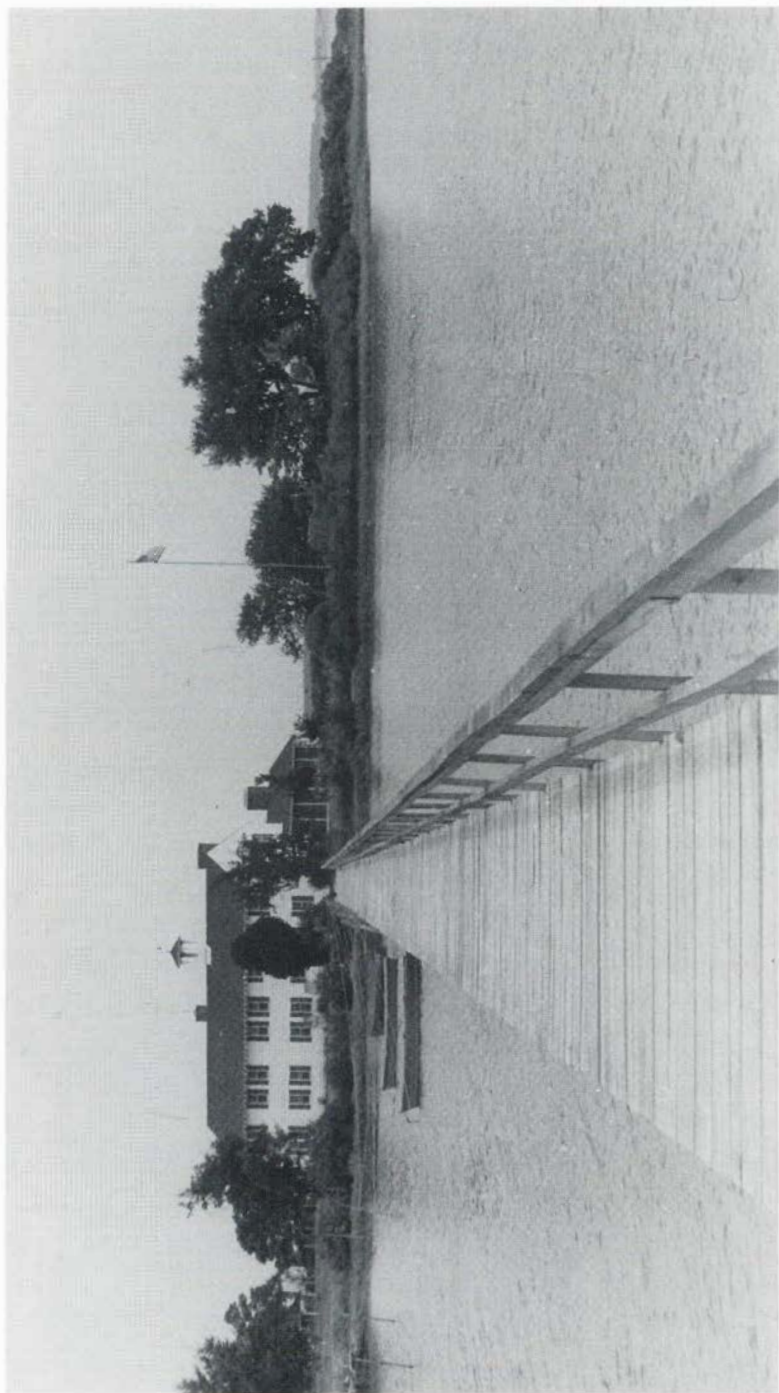
GUESTS AT THE LODGE

The first guest in the guest register was Stanchfield Wright, December 4, 1948. Mr. Wright was one of Dad's closest friends, and had a beautiful farm just south of our old farm at Wickwire. Dad and Mr. Wright hunted together for years at the farms, and after moving to the island, Mr. Wright visited frequently. Many of our parents' friends came to hunt that first year.

The lodge was finished in the late summer or early fall of 1948. The guest register does not indicate the precise date, but it appears that it was fully occupied by September. Some younger friends of my parents from Georgetown, Connie Clevenger and Chris Berg, spent part of their honeymoon in the suite (which became known as the honeymoon suite) at the lodge in late September as Mr. and Mrs. F. Christian Berg, Jr. Connie and Chris thought the world of my parents. I'll always remember what Connie told me about my father many years later. She said, "Peter, Your father was a real gentleman."



The Poplar Islands Lodge sign at the end of the dock, with the lodge in the background.



A closer view of the lodge from the dock.



Our butler, John White, lowering the flag at sunset. John and his wife were invaluable attending guests at the lodge. They currently live in St. Michaels.

The 1948-49 hunting season was busy with gunners generally getting their limits. Comments from the register included: "Superlative," "Best ever," "Couldn't be better," "Out of this world," "I must return," "We love your island," and "One place in a million."

The cost for a day of hunting, which included the night's lodging and meals, was \$35.00. Considering that was over forty years ago, that was quite a bit of money, but it was obviously not too much, for the lodge was well booked. Dad advertised in "Field and Stream," the "Washington Daily News," and some other publications.

My mother worked very hard to run the lodge

NAME	ADDRESS	DATE	REMARKS
John S. W. Grant	St. Louis, Mo.	Nov. 20/44	Better than I expected
William A. Delmire	Penn Valley Pa	Nov. 20/44	Wonderful
Frank H. Cross, M.D.	Exeterbury, Pa	Nov. 20/44	Very nice lay out
Walter W. Saul	4327 Maryland Lane, Hollywood, Pa.	Nov. 20/44	Very nice lay out
Edward P. Henry	Pa. 2737 Pittsburgh	Nov. 20/44	Very nice lay out
John S. W. Grant	10112 4th St. Pittsburgh	Nov. 20/44	Very nice lay out
Wm. C. Bruce, Jr.	3651 Rawnsdale, Shaker Heights, Ohio	Nov. 23/49	
Camille E. Bruce	" " "	" " "	
LeRoy H. Harrison	Villa Tenny, Via Bellaria, Palm Beach, Fla.	Nov. 24/49	
Lucas S. Keckert	Neckmeyer Highlands, Volusia, Fla.	Nov. 26/49	Good luck to swell
Newbold Lawrence	Lloyd Harbor L.I.	Nov. 28	Warm weather, but a wonderful time.
John Pennywith	So. Orange N.J.	"	I want Joe Keckert to see this.
W. H. Keckert	Neckmeyer Highlands, Volusia, Fla.	Nov. 29/49	Having a wonderful time!
William A. Delmire	1018 4th Ave. West	Nov. 29/49	The food is out of this world.
William A. Delmire	100 Mellen Drive, Wallingford, Conn.	Nov. 29/49	I must return

A page from the Poplar Island guest register.

operation and manage the help. One couple lived almost full time in one of the cottages, and some of the help came over as needed from the mainland. The food was great, and the guests were treated superbly. It was so relaxing and laid back. Most guests came to hunt or fish, but some came just to relax. Wives and children who did not wish to fish or hunt had many enjoyable activities to choose from.

With Talbot County dry at that time, the bar at the lodge was stocked with the guests' own bottles. The law allowed a hotel with fifty guest rooms to have a liquor license, and the only place that qualified was the Tidewater Inn. With a fireplace in the bar and one at each end of the large dining room-lounge, the atmosphere was perfect for sportsmen to relax, play cards, enjoy their cocktails, and engage in the most interesting conversation. Someone said that we should have a lie meter that would detect the truth level of the conversation in the bar. There should also have been some device to measure the laughter, for there was certainly no shortage of that most pleasant of life's many sounds. Most hunters and fishermen take their sport very seriously, but they are also devoted to the sport of fun and relaxation.

As mentioned in the brochure, every guest's needs were tended to. If a hunter got cold in the blind, there was a boat nearby with a stove and hot coffee, and probably some hot rum. Guests were always in a good mood and having a good time.

One guest left a big impression on me, and obviously on my father. He had a great day shooting his limit of ducks in one of the off-shore blinds east of Jefferson. That night, in front of the fire, indulging in a detailed description of his great day in the blind, this very nice gentleman asked my father a favor. He said, "I shall return, and when I shoot in that blind again, I would be most appreciative if it is named after my wife." My father said that he would be

60—THE WASHINGTON DAILY NEWS, THURSDAY, JULY 6, 1950

OUTDOORS—With Major Don Carpenter

PRESIDENT'S GUIDE

Last week we chummed with Capt. V. Haddaway on the boat "Marian" near the Bodkin Island at Crab Alley. Skipper Haddaway is head guide at the Poplar Islands Lodge near Sherwood, Md. on the Eastern Shore, he was at one time the fishing and hunting guide to Roosevelt and Truman.

While out with Haddaway we were stopped by a Maryland State Fish Police boat which warned all boats about keeping undersized rockfish (minimum size 11 inches) and small white perch under 7 inches. The conservation officer said too many people were bringing in undersized game fish, and that violators of the law would be prosecuted.

We were greatly impressed with the wonderful accommodations and sports possibilities of the Poplar Islands Lodge, several miles out in the Chesapeake on Poplar and Jefferson Islands. Our host, George Bailey, recently completed the construction of this fishing and hunting camp at a cost of \$100,000 on the site of the Presidential club which burned down in 1946.

ROTATES HUNTING

George Bailey is one of the country's foremost duck and goose hunting guides and authorities. He has devoted his life to this sport. He has built 11 blinds but only permits three a day to be used so as to rotate the duck hunting. The Lodge has accommodations for 14 anglers a day or six hunters. The food and accommodations compare with the Waldorf hotel, are very reasonable.

At present Poplar Islands Lodge is in the center of the Eastern Bay sport fishing which is tops for the bay, on croakers and rockfish. During the past week Marine Major Jim Rathbun caught an 8½-pound strip-er on a light fly rod there, while chumming with live grass shrimp, on the Happyway. The Major's big fish took out every inch of line and was licked after a long fight. During the same trip Lieut. Col. R. F. Scott, USMC caught a hardhead which weighed four pounds.

Mr. and Mrs. Irving Bulks, Howard Abel, J. Kirk Eads and Rev. W. Yule of Gaithersburg, caught a nice box of hardheads and rock in Eastern Bay the morning of July fourth. It was unusual because the fish bit all morning on live pin shrimp. Most croaker catches in July have been made at night.

Another hardhead seining report just arrived from the Eastern Shore states George Laurie and the Lednum boys made a near-record haul

of hardheads on the bay side of Black Walnut Point, off the two towers June 29 at night when they took 30 tons with one rig. Selling their catch at 20 cents per pound they divided up at \$1296 each for the night's work. Did someone ask where the hardheads are?

WHERE TUNA ARE

For the information of duck hunters we have a report of four young Oldsquaws off shore at Poplar Island unable to fly and a mixed bunch of about 20 young Scoters (Surf) and Oldsquaws on the same grounds.

An article about Poplar Island in the Washington Daily News, July 6, 1950.

pleased. "Very well," the gentleman said, "my wife's name is Annabelle," as he handed my father a \$100 bill. Dad did not want to accept the money, but the gentleman insisted. From that day forward, the southeast off-shore blind was always referred to as "Annabelle Blind."

Guests came from all over the East Coast, from Maine to Florida. And there were entries from such distant states as Illinois and Arkansas. Many Talbot County residents also visited the islands. One such resident visited as a friend and also a professional, Dr. Shepard Krech. Dr. Krech took care of my father during his long illness, and actually made house calls. That's a long way for a house call. Times have certainly changed, haven't they?

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CHORES

With so much to do in sprucing up the island, building and operating the lodge, and maintaining everything, there was always plenty of work to do. I enjoyed playing and exploring in my new environment, but I have always enjoyed working as well.

Captain Bunzy primarily ran the boats, took hunting parties and fishing parties, but he was my father's right hand man, and was able to handle most anything. We had other part-time boat captains, including Harvey Howeth from Sherwood. We had a full time couple that cooked and cleaned, but there were still plenty of chores for the Bailey kids.

Since I was pretty young and on the small side, I couldn't handle the heavier chores, but I was willing to tackle most anything. I loved to help. I helped Mom a lot, for she needed all the help she could get. When I wasn't in school, it was nice for her to have someone to do little jobs for her.

She had so much on her, but she didn't show it. She appreciated my help, and I wanted to help her all I could.

I took care of the chickens and collected the eggs. When the lodge was finished, one of my wintertime jobs was to put fire wood in the wood boxes. Each fire place had a nice built-in wood box, accessible to the outside through a small door. Of course, wood for the second floor fire place had to be carried upstairs, one log at a time for me.

With homework and shorter days during school, I didn't have many chores. But during the summer, there was much more to do. I helped caulk and paint the row boats. I didn't run the big lawn mower, but I provided moral support for my brothers, and I helped trim and keep the yard clean. Another chore, which no one probably really appreciated, was keeping twigs picked up along the nature trails. I traveled the trails all the time, and whenever I came across a stick or a branch, I would pick it up and chuck it into the woods, so I doubt that anyone realized what I was doing. I also explored the shorelines all the time, and if anything washed up on the shore that I didn't think should be there, I would get rid of it.

I have always liked things to be neat, so my constant roaming of the island kept a lot of things picked up. This was pleasing to my parents since they naturally wanted things to look nice for the guests. I guarantee you that no guest ever went anywhere that I hadn't already been many times.

Then there were some things for which I got paid. I ran a few eel pots to provide eels for the fishing parties. I caught crabs for the guests, both at the lodge and guests that visited on their yachts. My beautiful soft crabs, delivered to their yacht at the end of the dock, were always a big hit, I had more compliments on my soft crabs than you can imagine. I guess having them caught and delivered by a little boy, rather than a man, had something to do with it. Of course, no one really had to pay me for catching crabs, as

much as I loved it. Getting a little money was just an extra bonus.

Chores are part of every child's growing up. If they're not, they should be. My chores at the island were not heavy because I was so young, but I did a lot of things, and for me, it was usually as much fun as it was work.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

FAMILY SUNDAYS

One of the neat things at the island was Family Sunday. Dad came up with the idea, and since he was the head of the household, he could make things happen. The idea was that each Sunday would be designated as a family member's day. There were six of us, so every sixth Sunday, my turn would come. With guest schedules, and friends and relatives visiting, there were many interruptions. And when my father was sick, there were obviously times when Family Sunday did not occur.

When your Sunday rolled around, everybody had to wait on you. You could have breakfast in bed, you could get anything special you wanted within reason, and you could usually get to go somewhere special on the mainland. You had to be careful not to push your luck or ask to be waited on too much, for when you were a servant the other five weeks, paybacks could be tough.

Every time it was my Sunday, I always asked for a case of Grapettes or Lemonettes, which I kept under my



Dad being carried to the boat in our all-purpose dock cart, which doubled as his private chariot on "his" family Sunday.



Big Brother "Hugh", all decked out for something. Was it Family Sunday or a "date"?

bed. Grapettes were my favorite. I loved to have my brothers and sister wait on me. Sometimes I would have the family take me to Easton to the movies. One time we went all the way to Baltimore to the circus. What a day that was!

My father would get us to put a mattress in the big dock cart, have it fitted with an umbrella, and we would have to push him out the dock as he relaxed in the cart. I really looked up to my father. Everyone said what a gentleman he was. He was a man of the

world in my eyes, and I was eager to please him whenever I could.

My dear mother, who was the most deserving of all, was the least demanding. We would have to force accommodations on her, for she rarely asked for much. She was a great woman, and doing nice things for her came easy for the whole family. I realized later that the islands had obviously not been my mother's dream, but you would never know it. She loved my father very much, and she toiled endlessly to help make everything go smoothly. She hardly knew the meaning of the word selfish. She's the one that really made the whole thing work, asking nothing in return. I loved my mother deeply.

My oldest brother, Hugh, was attending prep school in Pennsylvania, but he returned home to help when Dad became ill. He was nine years older than me, so we were not what you would



(From left) Hugh's girlfriend, Evelyn, Hugh, and Sally.

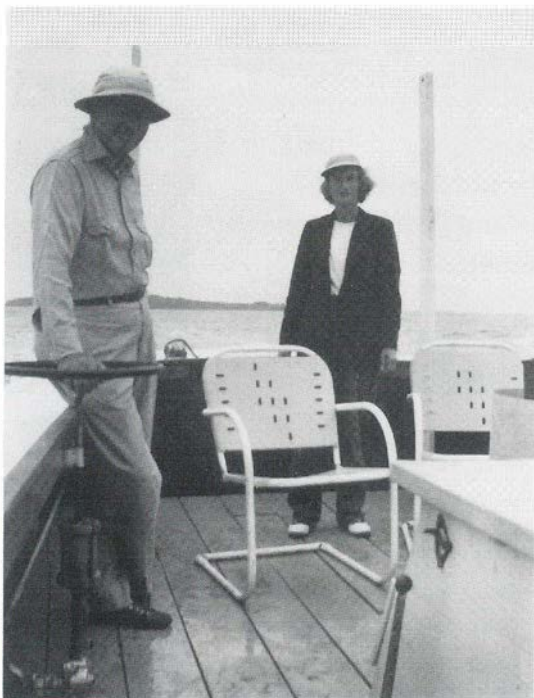
call close. But, of course, I looked up to him too. He knew how to run the big boats, and run them well. He could do a lot of things I couldn't do. He was my big brother. His favorite thing to do on Family Sunday was to go to the stock car races in Delaware.

My sister, Sally, was special. We didn't have too much in common, but when I needed somebody to talk to, she was always there, dear Sweet Sally. She was not always

sweet, however. One time, she got mad at me, so mad that she hit me on the head with her plastic hair brush. And guess what, it broke. Ouch! You can bet I chased her after that one. I really don't remember Sally's favorite thing for Family Sunday. She was easy to please, like my Mom.

And then, there was my dear brother Andy, my closest friend after my Mom, and my trusted crabbing buddy. Andy was the quietest one of all, but he would blossom a little more on Family Sundays. Andy was a special guy, but he never was much for standing out in a crowd.

Family Sunday brought our unique family together in a very special way, and helped to create many wonderful memories. Good idea, Dad!



Dad and Mom on the Sally Anne.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE DESTROYER

One warm spring morning, I came out to the kitchen as usual, and Captain Bunzy was sitting at the table with my father, drinking coffee. My mother was preparing breakfast. Everyone said a cheerful good morning.

Captain Bunzy said, "Peter, have you been outside yet?"

"No," I said, "why?"

"You mean you haven't seen it?" he continued.

"Seen what?" I asked.

"You better go see it before it leaves. A Navy destroyer pulled in last night and anchored in the Pot. Man, is it big!"

I ran past my mother out of the kitchen, through the main dining room, and out onto the big screened porch. I looked out on the Pot, but didn't see anything. It was early; the sun had just come up. With a couple of trees at the foot of the dock, I didn't have a clear view of the harbor. I ran

outside and down the walk the hundred feet or so to the dock. I scanned the whole Pot and out the entrance to the east. I didn't see a thing.

I must have missed it. I ran back in to the kitchen and said to Captain Bunzy, "There's nothing out there. It must have gone. What did it look like?"

"April Fool!" he chuckled.

"Captain Bunzy," I said, "that wasn't very nice. I believed you."

My father said "Bunzy, you did pull his leg pretty hard."

"Sorry," Captain Bunzy said. "I love April Fool's Day. I couldn't resist, sorry. It was really big though."

Everyone laughed, even me.

How many can remember an April Fool's joke played on them that long ago? I have loved April Fool's Day ever since, and I try to be very resourceful in coming up with an April Fool's joke to play on my wife, my daughter, and sometimes my friends.

I guess I was too young to realize that there wasn't nearly enough water in the Pot for a destroyer. And, of course, Captain Bunzy knew that. It was a pretty successful April Fool's joke, which I shall never forget.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

COMPASS

The long journey to and from school was made more exciting one winter by the discovery of a very friendly young black labrador at Lowes Wharf. He would jump up on me, try to lick me, and I just fell in love with him. Dad said that he obviously belonged to someone, and would soon find his way home. But every day he was there. I asked Dad if we could take him home, but he was sure that the dog's owner would soon find him.

I started bringing the dog food, and every day he was there. After having many good hunting dogs at Wickwire, my father chose not to use hunting dogs at the island. We already had two wonderful cocker spaniels, a mother and her offspring. The mother was the smaller, she was black, and named "Piggy." The daughter was blonde, and named Poplar Island's "Poppy." Poppy and Piggy were very friendly dogs and gave us a lot of pleasure.

I kept asking Dad if we could take the lab home, and he said no. Mom, I think, wanted me to have the dog, but

she wasn't sure how Poppy and Piggy would like another dog.

Finally, it was decided that the lab was not going home, wherever his home was, and I was told that I could take the dog home. I was so happy, I didn't know what to do. We brought the dog home and fed him a big meal. He ate so much, his stomach swelled up. I named my new treasure "Compass." Compass and I became inseparable. He would even accompany me in the row boat, and came to know the island as well as I did. Piggy and Poppy were jealous at first, but soon got used to Compass, for there was plenty of love and attention to go around.



*"Compass" on the dock,
no doubt looking for me.*

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

FISHING

I started fishing at Wickwire when I was five or six. At Pond Creek, we would catch sunfish, eels, perch and I don't remember what else.

Before moving to the islands, we used to go to Tilghman Island on weekends as a family and fish with Capt. Randolph Harrison, owner of the Blue Haven Restaurant and Motel. We would have contests for the first fish, the most fish, the biggest fish, and so on.

One time we got into breaking rock about twelve to fourteen inches in size. We were trolling with bucktails. As soon as your lure hit the water, there was a rock on it. You hardly had to reel in at all — pull the fish in over the stern, and the fish would either flip off or be quickly taken off by the mate. And you were back in the water for another rock. Believe it or not, I caught thirty four rock in a half hour, and received the big prize for the weekend. I got \$5.00 and a case of my beverage of choice, which was a case of Grapettes.



Captain Bunzy holding a nice "striper", hooked by an unidentified fisherwoman.

I'll never forget another time fishing, when we were with a group of private, as well as commercial boats. My father got talking to this couple on a small cabin cruiser that had a blue bottom. He told them to be careful, that the watermen believed that blue bottoms brought back luck. This boat stuck very close to us for the rest of the day, obviously somewhat apprehensive. When we went in that afternoon, the man said he was going to get his bottom repainted.

Sharps Island has been gone for a long time, but it was still there when we moved to Poplar Islands. I can remember vividly fishing around Sharps Island when fishing was really good, with as many as two hundred boats. Sharps was down to maybe two or three acres, and to make matters

worse, the Navy was using it as a bombing target. There was a big wooden framed screen on the small remaining piece of land, erected as part of the target.

One afternoon, with maybe one hundred fifty boats fishing around Sharps Island, some Navy planes started flying low over the water trying to get the fishing boats to leave so they could have some

bombing practice. The fishing was good, and no one would leave. They kept flying over lower and lower, but no one would leave. Finally, one of the planes dropped a small non-explosive bomb out from the fleet about a half mile, and they flew over low again. No one left, and finally the Navy planes flew off to the south.

Perhaps my most memorable fishing story occurred one Sunday afternoon in the late summer. We were trolling on the *Sally Anne* north of Poplar Island. We were using live eels with a hook through the mouth and one in the tail. All of a sudden I got a big strike and it just about pulled the rod out of my hand. I used to like to hold on to my rods, rather than leave them in a rod holder the way they do today. My father had to rush to my assistance and help me hold the rod. I started pulling and reeling with my father's help. It was really more than I could handle. My family was cheering me on, everyone speculating on how big it might be.



Sister Sally and me on one of our frequent fishing expeditions.

With Dad helping me hold the rod, I struggled for five or ten minutes and got it almost up to the boat. But my arms hurt so much, I just couldn't make it. I know Dad was afraid the big fish would come off, but he didn't want to take the rod away from me. I could barely turn the reel. Finally, I asked Dad to take over, and he pulled it in. We



Me, with rod in hand, and Mom.

brought it aboard with a big net. Everyone cheered. It was a huge rock. I forget exactly how long it was, but when we got home, we weighed it in at 17-1/2 pounds.

My family was giving me lots of praise. Mom prepared the big fish for dinner. Best fish I have ever eaten in my life, before or since.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

THE FIRST EFFECTS OF TELEVISION

Although Andy and I did some things together, especially crabbing, he was almost three and a half years older, which left me to entertain myself a great deal of the time. I was a great explorer. I knew just about every inch of Jefferson Island, and often rowed over to Poplar to explore the bigger island.

My solo journeys took me all over the island. I crisscrossed the yard to various parts of the shoreline on the island's southern end. I spent considerable time playing in the skeet houses at the northeast end of the yard. But most of my time was spent traveling the paths through the woods, along the shorelines, and at the north end of the island around the tidal pond.

The main path, which ran through the center of the woods, was called Kings Highway. As it neared the north end of the woods, just south of the pond, it turned to the east and out to the shore at the beach. About a third of the way down Kings Highway, Valliant's Lane branched off due



The main nature trail through the woods on Jefferson, named "Kings Highway" by my father. I traveled that path hundreds and hundreds of times.

east and came out on the shore at the southernmost end of the beach. A little farther down Kings Highway, Coaches Road branched off to the northwest and came out on the western shoreline of Jefferson. The western shoreline had no beach. It was the typical type shoreline with marsh grass and water bushes, not inviting territory for play or



"Kings Highway" came out on this beach near the far end.

exploration. Most of my expeditions took me to the beach on the eastern side, which extended northward to the end of the pond where there was a shallow, sandy inlet.

To hasten my explorations through the woods, I would pretend I was on a horse and go galloping down Kings Highway. (You see, I had become a great TV cowboy show fan as my parents' dear friends, Stanchfield and Jeanne Wright, had given us a brand new Sylvania black-and-white TV set for Christmas as a house warming present, thinking we were too isolated!)

Since I didn't have a horse like Hopalong Cassidy, I had to pretend. I would run down Kings Highway like a galloping horse, occasionally patting myself on the side like the cowboys whipped their horses. I pretended I was Hopalong or Sunset Carson. I made all the noises and did all the things they did, but with no horse, no saddle, no real guns. I did have a nice holster and belt with a real-looking

cap gun. When I was on my pretend horse, patting the horse encouragement with my right hand, I was holding the reins in front with my left hand. I would ride out on the beach up along the pond to the inlet. That was my very favorite spot. I would, invariably, encounter bad guys at my favorite spot and get into the typical cowboy fights. I fought bravely just like the cowboys on TV, except the bad guy was never really there. I would swing make-believe punches. I would take a few, falling back onto the sand. But I would always get up and come fighting back. Guess who always won? I played a lot by myself and remember having a lot of good times. I do not remember feeling lonely. It was a very interesting environment in which to keep myself entertained.

CHAPTER TWENTY

CROQUET AND AUNT ANNE

Croquet is a relatively popular American family game. But at our little island hide-away, it took on a whole new dimension. Sometimes guests played, but the serious croquet playing was by the family, especially when my aunt would visit. My mother's sister was one heck of a player.

Our croquet court was in the front yard between the big screened porch and the water, the same spot where Democratic Congressmen had played softball just a few years earlier. We had it laid out precisely and took the game very seriously. Sometimes we played individually, and sometimes partners. We often decided partners by shooting for the stake, and taking the first and second closest balls as partners, or perhaps the closest and farthest, etc. I loved getting my aunt as a partner because she was tough.

My Aunt Anne, Mom's sister, was an attractive and intelligent lady. She taught at a private girls' school in Massachusetts, and lived with another lady who taught at



Aunt Anne, in the middle with her arm around me, not on the croquet course, but at our favorite beach.

the same school. Aunt Elizabeth (Libbis) was not our real aunt, but as close as one. A nicer woman we have never known. These two aunts thought the world of the Bailey kids and were a very important part of our life.

My fondest memories of croquet are when Aunt Anne and Libbis were there. They added so much to the fun. Everyone became quite good at the game, which made for some great competition. We loved to send each other long distances in the wrong direction, toward the shore and over the bank, if possible, although that was quite a distance. Occasionally someone would miss, or hit their foot, which would provoke great laughter.

If Aunt Anne finished first, which she often did, she would never hit the stake. She would always become "poison" and come back after us one at a time. That's why I always wanted to be her partner. In playing croquet, Aunt Anne had a special knack for helping some and hurting others

in such a way that the competition became much keener and a lot more interesting. Croquet played a special role in our fun at the island.

I learned a lot of unique things from my aunt over the years, some more serious than others. In addition to helping me become a better croquet player, I'll never forget the way she taught me to eat an ice cream cone.

We bought some ice cream cones one day. I was licking along and looked at hers, and the ice cream had quickly disappeared from the top of the cone. I said, "Aunt Anne, you have eaten your ice cream so fast.

She said, "Peter, I haven't eaten it all. I have pushed most of it down inside the cone with my tongue, to make sure the ice cream lasts to the end of the cone." Ever since that day, that is the way I have always eaten an ice cream cone. She also taught me to wash my hands by rolling the soap over and over in my hands instead of rubbing it back and forth.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT

After crabbing, my greatest pastime was my row boat. We had four of them, plus a canoe. One of them was named *Peter*, but guess what? That was not the one I adopted. I laid claim to the one called *Stanchfield Wright*, given to us by Dad's close friend and named for him. It was lapstrake, had a rounded bottom, and was shorter and lighter than *Peter*.

I rowed the boat as much as I rode my bicycle, probably more. I kept it in great shape, and took great pride in having the privilege of having it. Somewhere I got an ensign, had a nice long flag staff made, and flew the American flag proudly from the stern of the *Stanchfield Wright*. It was beautiful, but looked a little strange with the staff and ensign's large size in relation to the size of the boat. I flew my ensign so proudly, and have done so ever since on every boat I have owned.

My friend, Doug Hanks, and I comment on the size of just about every ensign we see. We love the oversized

ones, and make fun of the owners of the small ones. The flag of our country should be flown in strict accordance with flag etiquette.

My mom would often make me lunch and I would row my boat around the island for hours, often pulling in to shore to get out and explore. I would find a neat place to get out and eat my lunch,

or might eat right in the boat. Sometimes I would row over to Poplar Island, explore the shoreline, and also go ashore to explore the island. There was always something interesting to do.

I usually had a crab net with me, for whenever I saw a crab, it was my nature to want to catch it. One time I was fooling around in the row boat not too far from the dock in about two to three feet of water. I saw what looked like a crab, but it was huge, and it had moss on it. I thought it might be a rock. I got the net and carefully positioned it not to scare the crab, if that's what it was. When I had the net right where I wanted it, I swept under the crab and brought the net into the boat. I had caught it. It was by far the biggest crab I had ever seen. It had to be old, for it had moss and slime all over it. I had a galvanized bucket in the boat, and put the crab in the bucket so I could show it to my family. The crab was so big that it would only fit about half way down in the bucket. I knew my brother wouldn't believe me unless I had the hard evidence. Boy, was he surprised!



Sally and me in the canoe.

I would row just about every day unless the weather was bad, and I became quite a good rower. My shoulder muscles became really strong. I could row quite fast, and learned to maneuver the boat very well. I would stop it fast, rotate the boat in its own length, row backwards, and do all kinds of interesting maneuvers.

Sometimes I would take my sister or my mom for a ride, letting them sit in the back seat while I rowed around the shore showing them my little interesting spots. I knew that island like the back of my hand, every inch of the shoreline, and just about every inch of the land.

When I said we had four row boats, we didn't start off with four. My father bought the fourth one new, and it arrived at the island in a huge cardboard shipping box. Hugh's friend from boarding school, George Forsythe, was there. These guys would have been about seventeen, so they were pretty big and strong compared to me. They ripped open this box and pulled the boat out. It was probably about fifteen feet, rather light, with a relatively low free board. It was equipped for two rowers and it looked like it would be pretty fast. Hugh and George launched the new boat, got out the oars, and took her out for the maiden voyage. I had never seen a row boat go so fast in all my life. You would have thought it was a shell.

I loved our row boats and would



Hugh and his school roommate, George Forsythe, rowing the new rowboat, fresh out of the box.

row them all, but I always came back to the *Stanchfield Wright*. We also had a canoe, and I used that a lot, but I preferred rowing. I would have liked to go to a college when I grew up that had crew as a sport, but unfortunately, Johns Hopkins did not have crew. I was sure that I could have excelled in the sport, since I had spent hundreds of hours rowing at the island.



A good view of George Forsythe and the new rowboat, designed for speed with its narrow beam.

Although my oldest brother had a sailboat, about an 18 footer named *Nonesuch*, no one taught me how to sail at the island. I have since become an avid sailor, and consider it unfortunate that I did not get interested in sailing at the islands.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

FOURTH OF JULY

While out fishing one day, my parents met another couple on a boat from the Western Shore, and they became great friends.

Their name was Baroody. I thought the name was a little funny, but what great people! My parents invited them to the island, and thereafter, they came with great frequency. I have no idea where they live or if they are still alive, so I cannot ask their permission to tell this story. I am not sure if they hooked a crab pot with their prop, or just couldn't resist the temptation one day. But to make a long story short, they were dying for some steamed crabs and happened to have a nice cooking pot aboard. They did not steal the crabs, mind you. They told us that they compensated the crabber handsomely by leaving some silver dollars in the bait compartment of the crab pot.

There are certain stories you never forget. When our friends related this story, my father told them that it was nice of them to leave money, but cautioned them that they

would not like to get caught by the crabber messing with his pots. They took my father's advice thereafter and let me catch them their crabs.

What's this got to do with the Fourth of July, you are wondering? Well, as I said, the Baroodys were great people. They really liked us kids. And on the Fourth of July, they would bring us bags of fireworks, and we would have a great display of our own at the island. I so enjoyed the different kinds of fireworks, most of which were shot out over the water. But one of the greatest treats were the sparklers. We would twirl them around, run across the yard with them, and just before they burned out, we would throw them high into the air. What fun!

When I knew they were coming, I would go out and catch crabs for them. They insisted on paying me even though they were bringing a lot of expensive fireworks for our entertainment.

Fortunately, we were able to give the Baroodys and ourselves an extra bonus. We would go atop the lodge in our glass-enclosed cupola and see fireworks displays all the way from St. Michaels and Oxford. Can you imagine how much I looked forward to the Fourth of July, and the arrival of Mr. and Mrs. Baroody?



Mr. Baroody clowning for the camera, with Sally sitting in the helm seat.



*Mrs. Baroody, me, Mom and Dad
(partially in the picture).*

coming in a seaplane. How exciting! It circled the Pot, and with a gentle westerly breeze, it approached from the east and touched down in a flurry of spray. It was a good-sized twin engine plane and very exciting to see them land and later take off at the end of the day.

One Fourth of July weekend was extra special, for we were paid a rather unusual visit. Dad announced that their good friends from Earleville, Bill and Helen Jeanes, were coming to visit, but that we wouldn't have to pick them up. "How so, I asked?"

"Because they're coming by plane."

But we didn't have a landing strip. How was that possible? They were



*Mr. Baroody, Dad and Andy in the
background.*

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

THE HURRICANE

As is most of the Eastern Shore, the islands were very low, only a few feet above sea level. It was in the summer of 1950, and we had gotten word that a big storm was coming up the coast. The winds would possibly be of hurricane force with very high tides predicted for the Bay. We did everything we could to prepare, putting double lines on the boats, securing anything that would blow away, and moving things that might be damaged by high tides.

There was not much in the way of weather forecasting then. We had no idea how bad it would get, but we felt like we had done what we could to get ready, within reason. It was after lunch and I was on the porch of the kitchen cottage building some sides on my wagon. There wasn't much wind yet but the tide was rising much higher than usual. There was a line of large water bushes along the shore about a hundred feet from the cottage, and my view of the water was largely obstructed.



Dad was a great seaman. With him to prepare us, I did not fear the approaching storm.

I was quite wrapped up in my work and didn't pay much attention to the tide. Then, all of a sudden, I noticed a big pool of water in a low spot between the cottage and the shore. I ran out to investigate, and the tide was coming up over the shallow bank and running to low spots in from the shore. It was really quite exciting. Of course, I still had no idea what to expect.

The wind picked up slowly but steadily. It was mid-afternoon by then. And the tide kept rising, with more and more low spots being covered with water all the time. Although it was exciting, something I had never seen before, it was kind of eerie. Night was coming, and with it, higher winds and higher tides. I wondered just how high the tide might go. My father pointed out to everyone that we may be without power. There were two diesel generators in a small building just past the kitchen cottage that generated our electricity. I don't remember exactly how they were set up, but there were also some large heavy batteries, and water in the building was going to require the generators to be shut down. Dad instructed us to get out all the candles and flashlights and be prepared for a night without power. Mom and Sally were busy getting the house ready and making sure we would have enough food.

As the water continued to rise, Dad said we were going to have to get our chickens to higher ground. We had chickens for one purpose, as far as I know, to supply us and the guests with a ready source of eggs. I felt important because I was heavily involved with this project. It was within an hour of sunset, but of course, the sun was not visible behind the dark clouds. It was almost dark. Since most of the yard was now under water except a couple of acres up around the lodge, we used the canoe to rescue the chickens. The chicken house was down past the power house, the last building of the group.

The chickens acted like they didn't want to be saved when they had to ride in the canoe, but Andy and I were successful in getting them all to higher ground on the leeward

side of the lodge. This dramatic rescue added to the excitement and the anticipation of what might come next as darkness set in.

The kitchen of the lodge was large and included a dining area where we ate most of the time. We were now all huddled in the dining part of the kitchen listening to the wind howl and wondering what the rest of the night would bring. The generators had been shut down. We were using candle light and enjoying some delicious, much deserved food prepared by Mom and Sally. I don't remember my father commenting on the wind velocity, but my recollection of what happened, combined with my years of experience with storms since, leads me to estimate that the winds must have peaked at 50 to 60 knots.

We were lucky to be spared the full force of this hurricane, since full hurricane winds and tide would have surely done a great deal of damage to our very vulnerable home.

Later that night, my father and Hugh put on their boots and foul weather gear and fought their way out the long pier to check the boats. The waves were breaking over the dock and they had to hold on tight to the railing all the way. It must have taken them an hour or more, and we were all very worried.

Somehow, I went to sleep that night. It was quite late. What an exciting experience! Wind and high water all around us for miles and yet we were safe on slightly higher ground in the security of our castle.

I awoke the next morning to sunshine and a moderate breeze, but the tide was still extremely high. We were able to paddle the canoe in many places around the island, which had previously been dry land, before the tide dropped later in the day. I had never experienced anything like this before, and it was terribly exciting. By the end of the day, the generators were humming, the chickens were back in their house, and things returned to normal for our little island hideaway.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

THE CROW SHOTS

During our years at the islands, thousands of crows roosted on Poplar Island. They would head for the mainland in the morning where there was more food and fly back in the late afternoon. Seeing crows fly back and forth and hearing their distinctive calls became so commonplace that you normally wouldn't even notice. As they arrived back at the island late in the day, their calls made a steady clatter. Thank goodness their roost was a half mile or so from the lodge. Depending on the velocity and direction of the wind, the noise could be annoying if you let it get to you.

My father rationalized that he could help control the noise and have some great sport as well by having a few crow shoots. He invited a lot of friends, and his friends were encouraged to invite their friends. There would be fifty or so hunters spread around the two islands.

There were several Talbot County residents included in those crow shoots. Surely there are some around who

Chesapeake SKIPPER



April 1951

Twenty-five Cents

CROW SHOOT — A PICTURE REPORT

by Conway Robinson (See Page 8)

"Chesapeake Skipper" feature article on one of our crow shoots.

remember taking part in these popular events. Everyone seemed to have a great time. There was a lot of shooting, a lot of stories, plenty of laughter, and quite a few dead crows. Most of the men would come into the lodge afterwards for drinks and dinner, and of course, more stories and laughter.

I could never forget my first crow shoot. Most of the men were put on the big island. My father and a few close friends stayed on Jefferson, and I was invited to join them. Boy, did I think I was a big shot! And with us was a friend of my father's, Don Carpenter, an outdoor sports reporter with the "Washington Daily News."



CROW SHOOT

By CONWAY ROBINSON

POPULAR ISLAND, just south of Bloody Point light, was the scene of a massacre when more than two score yachtsmen and sportsmen from Baltimore, Washington, and elsewhere joined last day's sport shooting crows at Whitelake's club here. Skipper sent its newest Corresponding Editor, Conway Robinson, along to do some shooting with his camera. While the hunters shot crows, Ruby shot the following picture report.



On the cover: A boatload of hunters arriving at Poplar Island.

Top left: Passing the ammunition aboard at the Yacht Basin, Annapolis, are (l-r) William Jones, Round Bay; Ed Wescon, Round Bay; Eddie Leonard, Annapolis; Capt. Tom Trott, Annapolis; and Capt. Stanley Windsor, Annapolis.

Center left: Hunters disembarking at Poplar Island.

Bottom left: Hunters deploying.

Center: Tom Dunn (left), Severna Park, and Bob Williams, of Edgewater, go ashore.

Center: Bob Williams opens the first barrage at 5:15 p.m., the time agreed upon to start blasting crows.

Top right: Jack Bench (left) and Jack Crawford, both of Baltimore, retrieve their bag of birds.

Center right: Ed Robinson, Eastport, gets set from a concealed position to open fire on the "black marauders."

Bottom right: Eddie Leonard (left) and George Bailey, of the Poplar Island Lodge, look over a portion of the day's bag of 660 dead crows.



We went down Kings Highway and cut to the east down Valliant's Lane to the south end of the beach. Listening to the men talk was special. I felt like a real man. I got to talk to Mr. Carpenter and the other men. I was conscious about handling my gun like a veteran, and I remember someone commenting about me looking like a real hunter.



A clearer picture of the crow hunters. My father has his hand on the far piling. Captain Bunzy is in the stern of the boat pulling on the dock line.



Eddie Leonard of Annapolis, and my father, looking over some of the day's bag of crows.

Not long after we got out on the beach, we spotted the crows flying across from the mainland. My heart started beating more rapidly. I really didn't know what to expect. Then we saw a flight of crows heading our way and Dad said he wanted me to shoot. Most of the bunch veered out of range to the north, but two crows came over in range. "Shoot," Dad said in a loud whisper. I was so nervous. I waited a little too long. They were directly overhead. I took aim and fired with my 410 pointed straight up. The crow started falling. I couldn't believe it. Someone else quickly shot and brought down the second crow. The men were cheering. I was numb with excitement. My Dad patted me on the shoulder and said, "Great shot, son!" The rest of the men congratulated me.

We got some more crows, but since I bagged the first one, my first crow ever, the men didn't give me any more special treatment. My 410 was outgunned by the 12 gauges and I couldn't claim any more kills on my own.

When we returned to the lodge, there was a lot of talk about my first crow, and I received many congratulations from the men. It was obviously a great thrill, not just to kill my first crow, but to be included with the men, to be in the same group with a famous sports reporter, and to be congratulated by so many of the hunters.

The thrill slowly wore off over the next few days, but came roaring back when the "Washington Daily News" arrived with a wonderful article by Major Don Carpenter about the crow shoot. There was a whole paragraph describing how I shot the group's first crow and my own first crow. Just think, eight-year-old me in the sports section of the "Washington Daily News". Wow!!!!

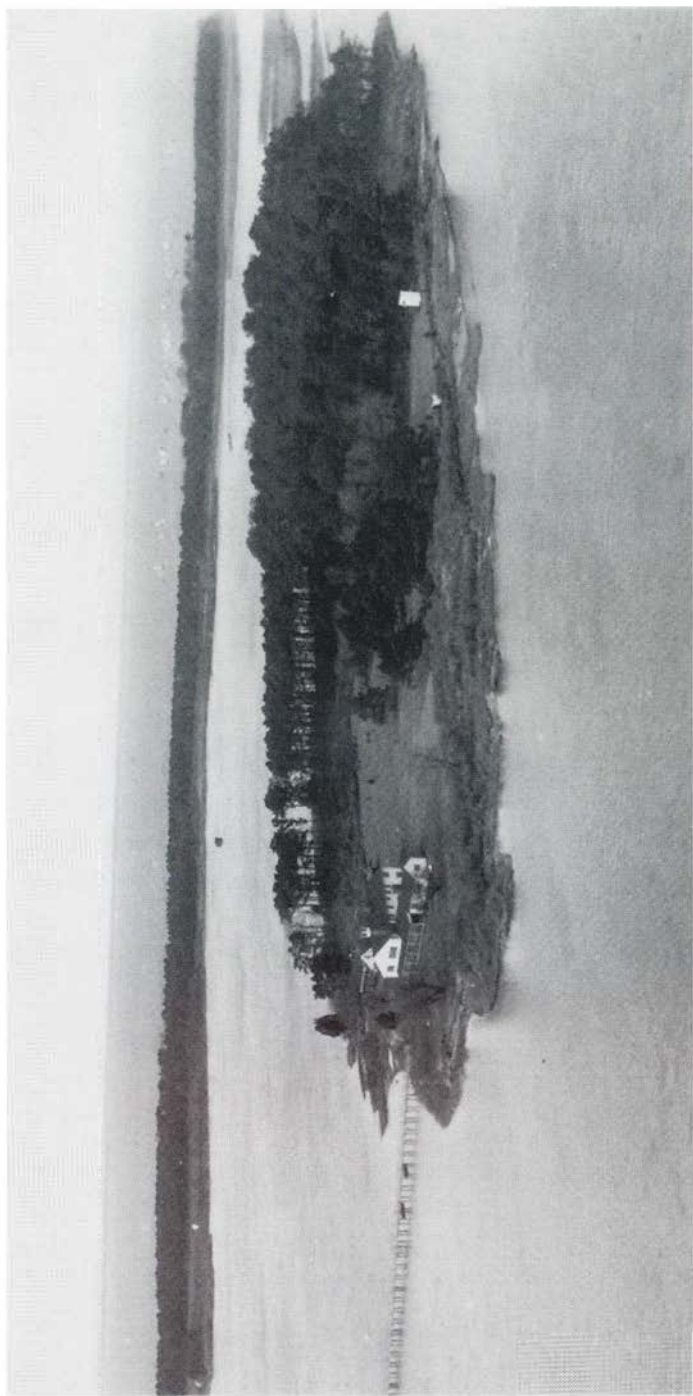
CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

SKIPJACKS GALORE

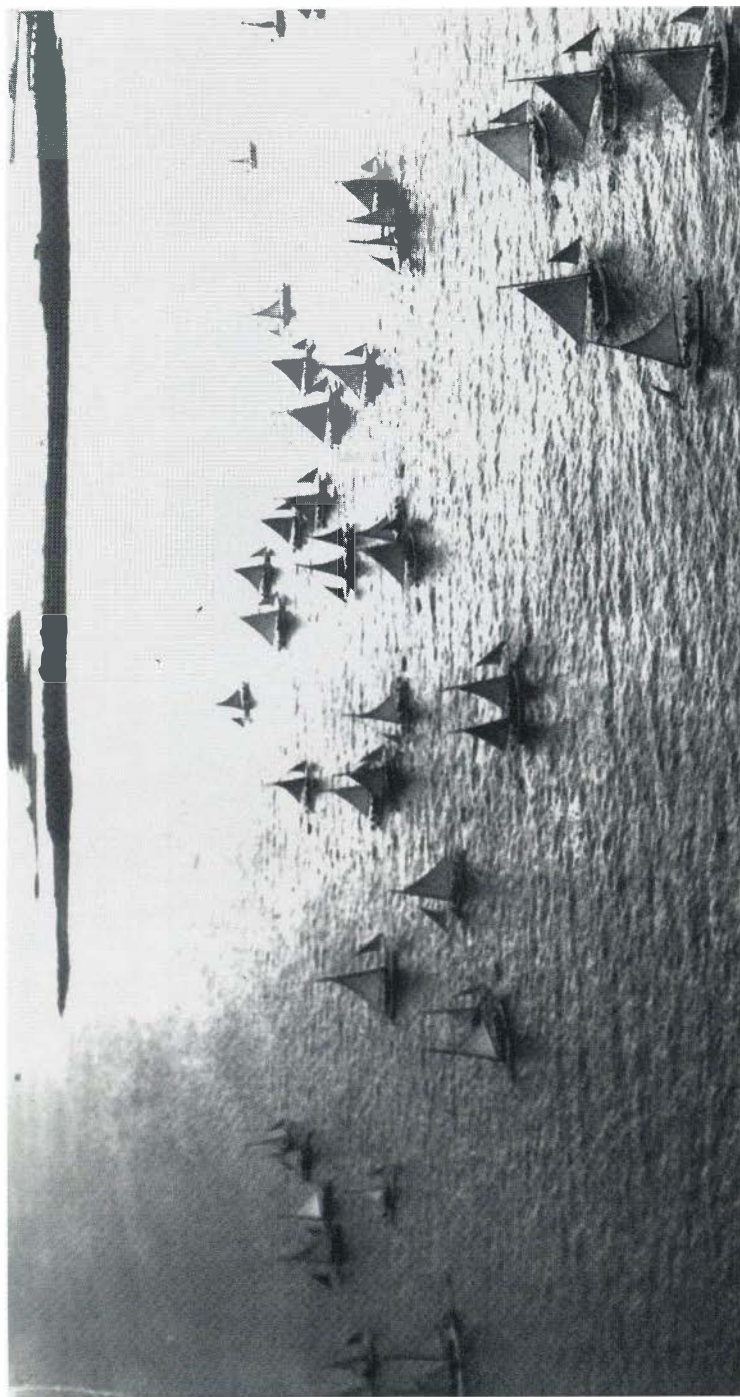
Endangered species are in the news a lot these days, and this term is often used more broadly to cover a wide range of things from our past that are becoming extinct. Much is said and written locally about a cornerstone of Eastern Shore tradition, the Chesapeake Bay skipjack. We are all sad to hear that there are fewer than ten working skipjacks remaining.

An important part of any dying breed is the memories of its heyday. As anything gets older and faces death or extinction, memories can keep it alive. In talking of our beloved skipjacks, how many can say that they saw what I am about to describe?

During our time at Poplar Islands, there was a huge fleet of skipjacks. They often worked the waters off Poplar Islands, and when oystering was good, they would not put into home port for days at a time. The huge buy boats would buy oysters from the skipjacks at sea, weather permitting, enabling the skipjacks to maximize time on the oyster bars and make more money.



Aerial view of Jefferson Island, with part of Poplar Island in the background. Barely visible behind Poplar is a fleet of working skipjacks. The small white building on the right side of Jefferson Island is a skeet shooting house built by the Jefferson Islands Club. The Pot, between Jefferson and Poplar is where the skipjacks anchored for the night when they were working the area.



Part of the skipjack fleet working northwest of Poplar Island, which can be seen in the background. Photo courtesy Historical Society of Talbot County.



*An even larger group of skippiacks dredging for oysters between Bloody Point and Poplar Island.
Photo courtesy Historical Society of Talbot County.*

The Pot was a favorite anchorage of the skipjacks in those days. One afternoon, a larger number of boats than normal began entering the harbor. Andy and I decided to take one of the row boats and count just how many boats there were. It was a nice fall day with a gentle breeze and the sun was near setting. We rowed around the Pot counting boats, and guess what was the final count? Seventy-five skipjacks. That is correct, seventy-five skipjacks hanging their lanterns in the rigging. And on top of that, there were seven buy boats at anchor with the fleet, along with three DNR police boats to monitor the fleet. What a sight to see and what a memory to have of those lovely vessels that are rapidly becoming extinct!

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

NOTE IN A BOTTLE

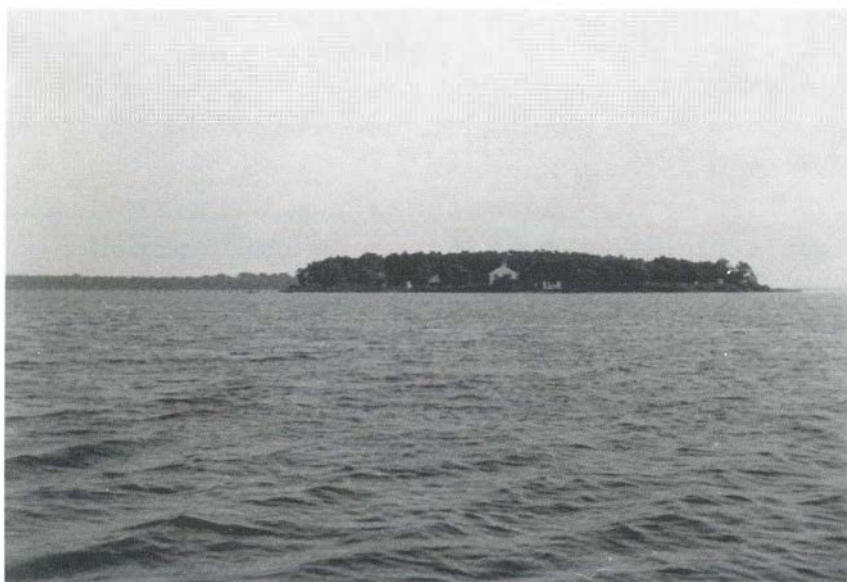
I do not know at what age boys become interested in girls. But at age ten, I remember having a little more than a passing interest in the opposite sex. Other guys got to see girls all the time. I didn't. I saw them only at school, and could interact only during recess, and perhaps at lunch. Well, yes, on the school bus too.

There was one girl at Tilghman Elementary School that I considered a particularly good friend. And during the summer, of course, I didn't go to school and rarely went to any parties or functions where I would see my friends. Occasionally, I would stay ashore with a friend for the weekend, and was able to see other friends.

My last summer at Poplar Island, I remember feeling a bit lonely for my friends ashore, this one girl in particular, whose name I shall not mention. I don't know where I learned about putting notes in bottles, but I must have known that islands and notes in bottles kind of went together. I decided that was the thing for me to do.

As I recall, the note was only mildly romantic, like “I really miss you,” etc. I signed it, picked a sturdy bottle with a tight seal, and rowed it out away from the island on an ebb tide. I didn’t want it to go ashore on Coaches Island, of course, so I had to take care that it had a reasonable chance of reaching Tilghman. What a crazy idea. She didn’t even live on the bay shore, she lived in town on the river side. Well, I chucked it in the water anyway, and watched it slowly drift south in the general direction of Tilghman.

When I saw her again, I sure as heck hadn’t forgotten, and I remember being a little nervous. But she didn’t say anything about finding my note. And I never heard from anyone about my bottle. I wonder where that note ever ended up? Someone somewhere must have eventually found it. Who knows, it may have found its way all the way to the ocean.



My note in the bottle was thrown in the bay on an ebb tide, which would have carried it towards Tilghman Island.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

THE END

I have avoided saying much about my father's illness because of the great sadness and hardship it brought on the family. I was the youngest and had been largely insulated from what was happening.

He first became ill in the fall of 1949 with very high blood pressure. This was before there was medication available to lower blood pressure. My father underwent very serious experimental surgery at Johns Hopkins where he was cut half way around his mid-section in an attempt to do something with the arteries to relieve the high blood pressure. After the first operation healed, another one was done on the other half of his body. The operations were a total failure and very painful. This began my poor mother's ordeal with trying to run the lodge, visiting my father in Baltimore, and raising a family all at the same time. She was incredibly strong.

My oldest brother, Hugh, was attending Westtown, a Quaker school in Pennsylvania. My mother had to call him

home to help, and so he finished his schooling at St. Michaels High School.

My father slowly recovered in 1950 and was almost his old self by hunting season. But in the spring of 1951, he became very ill again. There was no citizens' band radio in those days, and to have radio communication at the lodge, we had to bring a marine radio from one of the boats and use a power converter, so we could call the mainland from the house. Twice we had to call the Philadelphia operator and get her to dispatch a doctor and ambulance to Sherwood for my father. Captain Bunzy and Hugh would have to put him in the big cart, and lower him aboard the boat to race ashore. The last time was in June of 1951. Dr. Krech was summoned and there was no ambulance available. He had to come in his own car and help transport Daddy ashore and to Memorial Hospital in Easton.

Since I was less than twelve, I wasn't allowed on the patient floors. Mom got the nurse to smuggle me up the back stairs. I saw him once more before he died on July 10, 1951, at the young age of forty four. I cherish this letter he wrote me from the hospital shortly before he died (see page 148).

I have only come to learn in years since how terribly hard all this was on my mother and the rest of the family. I wasn't even ten when he died. I had been protected, and allowed to live a happy life in Paradise. I didn't realize then that I was the only one in the family that was able to really enjoy the islands. The real sadness only sunk in later as the years wore on, and I learned more and more of what the rest had gone through. I was just seven when he first became sick, and was allowed to enjoy a unique and largely very happy life.

The last entry in the guest register was a couple from Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, September 9, 1951, after which my mother sadly wrote "The End."

POPLAR ISLAND LODGE
SHERWOOD, MARYLAND

Wednesday.

Dear Peter Boy,

I think the "Camp"
is a fine place the
way you and Andy
have fixed it up. That
was a good paint
job. Has mother seen
it yet? Give her a
big kiss for me every
time you think of it.

*A treasured letter my
father wrote to me from
the hospital shortly before
his death.*

I Hope all of you
are eating great big
meals of Harrington's
food, and I'll bet
you are.

Here is a whole lot
of love and a great
big kiss * from
your Dad.



A lonely walk along the beach for Mom, before leaving the islands for good.



A picture of the family, with Captain Bunzy, minus Dad, shortly before leaving the islands.



The furniture on the barge again, this time leaving the islands behind the Marion. The picture was taken by Hugh from the Sally Anne, with my bike clearly in view.



Cottages and Lodge on Jefferson Island



Lounge



Sitting Room

POPLAR ISLANDS LODGE

Poplar and Jefferson Islands

"The Playground of Presidents"

IN THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

This historic Eastern Shore property consists of two islands, said to be the finest ducking and shooting site in Chesapeake Bay. Poplar and Jefferson Islands are 3 miles offshore from Sherwood, Maryland, and only 50 miles by air from Washington.

For many years Jefferson Island was the site of the Jefferson Islands Club, known as "The Playground of Presidents." In 1919 Poplar Islands Lodge was built on the site of the old club house, which had previously been the site of the Valliant's trading post.

The 17-room lodge is substantially built, with all modern comforts. Five big Heatorator fireplaces add a cheerful and sometimes welcome touch. The lodge is screened throughout, has ample closets, an exceptionally good heating system, six stall showers and plenty of modern baths. A large screened porch is as inviting when the weather is warm as is the big lounge with fireplace, picture windows facing south, and the heavy oak beamed ceiling. There are two cottages on the islands, as well as utility buildings and kennels.

Poplar Island is comprised of about 200 acres of good well-drained land, and a fine stand of marketable pine and oak timber. On it is a cleared air strip 2,500 feet long. Jefferson Island consists of 20 acres in timber and cleared land, with a pier running out to deep water for anchorage of good-sized boats.

The shallow waters around both islands have heavy growths of wild celery and other grasses which make them natural feeding grounds for canvasbacks, mallards and all kinds of game ducks. Miles of shoreline provide ample space for duck blinds. Poplar Island has good cover for quail, pheasant, wild turkey and small game. Striped bass and sea trout are so abundant in the area that the 1946 Fishing Derby was held just offshore, and good oyster and crabbing grounds lie in the straits between the islands and the mainland.

(OVER)

OWNER: George K. and Marion S. Bailey, c/o Previews Inc., 49 East 53rd Street, New York 22, N. Y. Tel. PLaza 8-2630; or Previews Inc., Attn. of Willis Putnam, Queenstown, Md. Tel. 2574.
PROPERTY: Poplar Islands Lodge, Poplar Islands, Sherwood, Talbot County, Md.
INSPECTION: To be arranged through Capt. Varoon Haddaway, Sherwood, Md. Tel.: Tolgman 4225.

MORTGAGE: Free and clear
TAXES: To be determined

CUT ON THIS LINE 4/50 No. 43100
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*The "Previews" brochure advertising the islands for sale.
(This and opposite page.)*



Aerial View of Jefferson Island



Poplar and Jefferson Islands



The Lodge



Rear View of Lodge



One of Cottages

TABLE OF FACTS

LOCATION: Poplar Islands, Md., former site of Jefferson Islands Club, called "Playground of Presidents." Best duck-shooting site in the Chesapeake, 3 miles offshore from Sherwood (general store within 1/2 mile of landing), and Talbot County, well-known for fine old estates; near Tilghman, famous fishing center. School buses pass landing. Ferry service from Claiborne, connecting with ferries to Western Shore. Regular bus service to Easton (20 miles), county seat with good stores, churches, clubs, schools. RR. air service to all points (50 miles by air to Washington, 175 to New York).

PROPERTY: Poplar and Jefferson Islands, total area about 254 acres, approx. 7 miles of waterfrontage. About 3 acres landscaped around houses, with lawn, shade trees, goldfish pool, deer range and pavilion, outdoor grill with roof. 12-acre cleared tillable field suitable for 2,500' landing field. Cleared walks through woods on smaller island. Remainder of acreage heavily wooded with fine stand of deciduous and pine timber, marshes; salt ponds where black ducks breed; sand beaches and coves. Lagoon between islands forms perfect harbor for boat anchorage and seaplane landing. New, exceptionally substantial Dock, 612' long, raised 3/8" of water last 150 feet, 60' Dock.

LODGE: 17 Rooms (12 master bedrooms, 5 baths). 2-story, frame, brick on concrete foundation, asphalt tile roof, built 1949. Screened throughout with plastic and copper screens. Tar paper insulation in walls. Ample closets throughout. Modern plumbing, with each bathroom and kitchen dressed separately. 6 stall showers. 5 hearthplace fireplaces, interior wood-burners fed from outside. 2 oil furnaces. 3 separate gas-fired water heaters. 2 automatic Kohler electric plants (1 of 1,500 watts, 1 of 10,000 watts). Tank gas (14 tanks). 360° arctic air wall. Septic tank. Radio marine telephone on boat. Everything brand new, in excellent condition.

FIRST FLOOR: Large screened Porch, Lounge (34' x 18'), Heuluator fireplace each end; picture windows facing south, heavy oak beam ceiling. Bar or recreation room; fireplace, pine paneling to plate rail. Pine-paneled Sitting Room, fireplace. Paneled Bedroom. Private hall to Bath with tub and stall shower. Linen and supply closets. 4 additional Bedrooms. Bath, stall shower. Kitchen (33' x 13') with Dining Area at one end. Modern kitchen equipment available for separate purchase.

SECOND FLOOR: Sitting Room with fireplace connects with paneled Bedroom, adjoining Bath. 6 Bedrooms; 2 Baths, stall showers. Large supply closets. ATTIC: WATCH TOWER. **OTHER BUILDINGS:** 3-Room-and-Bath Cottage; 2-Room-and-Bath Cottage, both with screened porches, electricity, hot water. Engine and Pump House; Tool Shed, Chicken House; Dog Houses.

PRICE: \$90,000

(OVER)

PREVIEWS LISTING NO. 43100

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HARRY GALLIGHER, Pinkard and Co.,
Easton, Md. Tel.: Easton 1581.

POSTLUDE

We left the islands at the end of the summer and moved to Royal Oak to start a new life. The islands were put on the market; and ironically, in January of 1952, the Jefferson Islands Club voted overwhelmingly in favor of buying back the islands and returning to their former location. Unfortunately, they were unable to find a buyer for St. Catherines, so they remained at that location. My mother was unable to sell Poplar and Jefferson until late 1953, and the islands have since changed owners five more times.

Coaches and Jefferson Islands have held up relatively well with protection from the shoals of Poplar Island, but Poplar has all but disappeared, now consisting of barely five acres in four tiny pieces. But the intrigue of this famous Chesapeake Bay landmark is not over.

As incredible as it may seem, the State of Maryland is undertaking the largest attempt ever made to put material dredged from shipping lanes to a "beneficial use". The State will soon begin building dikes at Poplar Island as the first step in a \$458 million project that calls for 38 million cubic yards of sediment to be used to build a 1,100 acre complex of uplands and marshes. Some of Poplar's very own soil, that washed away into Chesapeake shipping lanes, will return and be part of a new habitat for birds, fish, shellfish and other bay creatures.

If this plan, indeed, becomes reality, Poplar Island will live on to the delight of many more generations.

PA
6/62

About the Author

Starting at a young age with a pair of oars, the Author has always been an avid boater. The Poplar Island experience put the salt water in his blood to stay. Although most of his boats have been power, he began crewing on Chesapeake Bay log canoes at age fifteen, and since 1972, has raced extensively in the cruising division on the Bay. His nautical experience includes the major east coast ocean races.

A 1966 graduate of Johns Hopkins University, the Author has worked for the last twenty-seven years with a locally based international manufacturing company, currently as Vice President of Manufacturing and Engineering. He lives on Trippe Creek, Bailey's Neck, with his wife, Joyce.



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